Mediation and Gangs: A Study of Violence Reduction in the Metropolitan Police Area in London

Eric J. Phelps

University of Portsmouth: Institute of Criminal Justice Studies

September 2015

Submitted to the University of Portsmouth in Partial Fulfilment of the Professional Doctorate Degree in Criminal Justice

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award

Word Count – 50,966 (excluding appendices, acknowledgements, list tables).

Signed…………………………………………………Date………27 September 2015
Abstract

Gang violence in London is an increasing problem that has gained momentum in the last two decades. Finding workable solutions to reduce gang violence or interventions in the current economic climate is a constant challenge for practitioners. This study examines the use of mediation as a tactic for reducing gang violence. Through data analysis, outcomes of this intervention are explored. The initial research conducted shows that there is a significant correlation between reductions in violent reoffending between those referred for mediation and those not referred. Further analysis of 17 semi-structured interviews conducted in the UK suggests that individuals do not have to engage in the mediation process for it to have an effect. Very often, the fact that an individual has been referred will be sufficient to deter continued violent offending. This research suggests that the implications for practice requires a unified co-ordinated response to violence that includes the proactive provision of joined up activity from the authorities, such as education, housing, health, social services and employment agencies. Their services need to be adequately funded, properly resourced and intelligently delivered in order to provide the necessary support required to end the cycle of gang related violence and offending generally.
Limitations of the research ................................................................. 113
CHAPTER 5 IS MEDIATION EFFECTIVE? .............................................. 130
Findings and analysis from quantitative data ...................................... 130
Reoffending Analysis ................................................................. 135
General Reoffending ................................................................. 139
Violence ................................................................................ 140
Serious Violence ...................................................................... 141
Minor Violence ......................................................................... 142
Weapon Related Offences ........................................................... 143
Sexual Offending ........................................................................ 144
Acquisitive offending ................................................................... 144
Drugs ...................................................................................... 145
Engaged with mediation .............................................................. 147
Logistic Regression Analysis ...................................................... 148
CHAPTER 6 WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EFFECTIVE MEDIATION? ......................................................... 151
Findings and analysis of the qualitative data .................................. 151
Understanding the meaning of “mediation” in the context of gang violence ...................................................................................... 152
Themes ...................................................................................... 154
1. Engagement in the process ...................................................... 155
Exiting the gang .......................................................................... 162
Prior knowledge of the incident .................................................... 164
The initial meeting ....................................................................... 167
2. Limitations of Mediation .......................................................... 170
3. Additional support that could enhance the mediation process ...... 174
Transformational services that complement mediation ................. 175
Other mediation options available ................................................. 179
4. Outcomes of mediation ............................................................. 181
CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION ................................................................. 190
Establishment of mediation and engagement ................................ 190
Violence desistance and opportunities to exit ................................ 192
Benefits and limitations .............................................................. 193
Successful outcomes ................................................................. 195
CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION ............................................................... 198
Sustainability ............................................................................. 214
Why the research is important for researchers and practitioners? ..... 219
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is the result of three years of qualitative and quantitative analysis and fieldwork combined with four years of work-related desk research. It is a reflection of an often challenging journey balancing the increasing pressures of work at the Metropolitan Police Service during and post London riots, where I played an integral role as a visible senior manager in the organisation at Camden Borough, through the difficult period of Met Change which saw personnel numbers cut beyond what was once thought imaginable, through to the conclusion of this research.

The whole journey was incomparable to anything I had ever experienced. It was made possible, in part, due to funding from the Metropolitan Police Services Emerging Leaders Programme, where I successfully achieved a place following a rigorous selection procedure in 2009 and the requirements of the scheme was conditional on my undertaking a period of post-graduate study.

Dr Phil Clements, who was attending an open day, convinced me that a Professional Doctorate was the way forward and instilled me with the confidence required to apply for the course. I am eternally grateful for this advice.

Many family and friends too many to mention, gave me the support and encouragement that I needed to carry out this work.

My sincere gratitude goes to the individuals that agreed to be interviewed and re-interviewed during the study, who I am unable to name because of my
promise to protect their identity. Were it not for their co-operation, I would not have been able to produce this work and contribute to enhanced learning in this field. I am eternally grateful for their relentless cooperation and patience.

This study was inspired and informed by my experiences whilst working at New Scotland Yard in 2009/10 rolling out mediation as a tactic to all boroughs in London alongside the Operations Manager. He is an inspiration to all who come in to contact with him. After over 30 years of public service, he remains as committed as ever to finding ways of improving not only individual’s lives, but improving services in whole communities in London adopting a real hands-on approach.

I owe sincere thanks to Manuel Santafé, Tina Siler and Diane Perrin for their dedicated proof reading of my earlier drafts and suggested comments for continuous improvement, Kelly Agudelo and Rob Walls for their contributions to my research and Dr. Phil Clements for his patience and tenacity in the many hours of one to one tutorials he endured pouring over my initial submissions. Together, their input significantly improved this final research project.

Portions of this work were presented at the 2012 Winter School at Portsmouth University and the Fulbright Fellowship application for 2013.

I take full responsibility for the contents of this thesis and any mistakes that have been made can only be attributed to me alone.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who taught me everything is possible.

Chapter 1 Introduction

“There is no bigger challenge or threat to the whole of London, perhaps with the exception of terrorism, than youth violence”1 Sir Ian Blair, Metropolitan Police Commissioner (2005-2008)

In the last two decades, there has been increasing concern about gangs and gang violence in the UK. Every day the media reports on violent incidents where a young person has been assaulted, stabbed, or worse, murdered by packs of feral youths, described as gangs, in the Capital. Violence has been at the forefront of British media, but no more so than in August 2011, when riots erupted on the streets of London and the rest of the UK, particularly in areas where gangs were known to operate.

In a Home Office report, Ending Gang and Youth Violence (Home Office, 2011), London gangs are said to be responsible for 16% of the capital’s total drug supply; 22% of serious violence; 4% of all sex offences, 14% of rape and 17% of stabbings. Gangs are also widely involved in firearms offences. 42% of shootings are associated to a victim or suspect who is a member of a gang.

The challenges facing those charged with keeping communities safe seem to be more complex than ever, and with the added burden of fiscal parsimony affecting the public sector, particularly the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and

---

1 The Times. 28th March 2008. Retrieved from aftermathnews.wordpress.com/2008/07/page/19
Social Services, innovative opportunities to deal with this ever increasing social issue are having to be explored. As of 31st August 2015, Police Chiefs reported an expected 25% cut to their overall budgets, which represents a 22000 cut in police officer numbers (The Guardian, 2015).

In February 2012, the MPS launched the Trident Gang Command, to manage and co-ordinate centrally, information, intelligence and activity against those associated with criminal gang activity, and in particular, those who posed a significant threat to the community. Criminal Justice partners together with local authorities are working together in order to effectively deliver appropriate responses to gang behaviour in the city. The Mayor of London chairs the London Crime Reduction Board, where agencies are brought together and activity is coordinated. Tackling criminal gangs is the main priority of all concerned and the objectives of the board are to focus activity on reducing reoffending and anti-social behaviour, through the provision of strategic leadership.

In May 2012, the Delivery Management Group of the London Crime Reduction Board implemented pan-London partnership strategy with an aim to tackle criminal gang activity across the capital adopting the Trident Gang Command approach. The strategy aims to monitor the effectiveness of enforcement activity against gang members; the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to manage risk associated with criminal gang members or those at risk of becoming involved; the effectiveness of prevention and diversion activity aimed at reducing the numbers of individuals involved in
criminal gang related offending; the overall impact of current activity in order to reduce gang related offending, such as serious youth violence. (London Councils, 2012)

The aim of this thesis is to explore the outcomes of mediation as an intervention with gangs in the context of consistently high occurrences of youth violence in London\(^2\), with a view to assessing its impact on violence reduction. In order to do this, it is necessary to understand the make up of gangs in London; where and how they operate, what is their motivation for existing and how they are organised.

This research aims to address the gap that exists in academic literature around outcomes of violence reduction and violence prevention using mediation as an intervention.

The purpose of this thesis is achieved by asking two research questions; how do members of gangs in London engage with mediation tactics when instigated, and what are the outcomes of successful mediation? These questions will be answered by addressing four key objectives that deal with specific aspects of the research. These distinct objectives will not be examined in isolation, as the outcome of each objective is entwined and impacts on subsequent phases of the research strategy.

The first objective is to determine how mediation was established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing violence. This is discussed in the

---

\(^2\) 3\% increase in Serious Youth Violence between 2008-2012("London Serious Youth Violence Offences 2001 to 2012," 2012). Violence against the person is up 21.3\% according to the MPS as of November 2015 (MPS, 2016).
context of how mediation as a tactic was introduced into the Metropolitan Police Area at a time of perceived rising incidents of violent intra-gang disputes and falling public confidence in the police pre and post the London riots.

The second objective arising from the analysis of Metropolitan Police data will be to explore the varying depths of the gang member engagement with this process, and critically assessing the outcomes.

The third objective is to determine the outcomes, benefits and limitations of mediation and transformational services and examines how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop, or reactive behaviours become apparent during the mediation programme.

The fourth objective drawing on the outcomes of 1 to 3 above and congruent with the aims of a professional doctorate is to identify the implications for practice.

The findings and validity of this thesis covers the period up until August 2015.
Preview

This thesis is arranged over 8 chapters. **Chapter 2** explores what is a gang and explores the world of gang membership, with a particular focus on street gangs in London.

**Chapter 3** establishes the theoretical framework for the research through examination of types of gang interventions and the outcomes they appear to be looking for, before moving on to discuss mediation as a tactic to reduce gang violence in London.

**Chapter 4** provides a comprehensive account of the research design, looking at data sources and methods used. It is intended to provide a clear and transparent account of these methods, without compromising police methodology and intelligence gathering processes.

I describe the research process from the outset and discuss my approach to the analysis. The journey of interviewee selection to practicalities around the actual taped interview process. There is a section on ethical matters, which required careful consideration. Samples and the sampling strategy, the parameters of the research site and the limitations of the analysis will also be presented.

The substantive analytical work begins in **Chapter 5** with a quantitative investigation into the outcomes of mediation and in particular, the difference in
outcomes on reoffending for those who were referred for mediation and those who were not. The results of the data sets are analysed.

Chapter 6 explores the qualitative research conducted, Interviews were conducted with a former gang member who after serving time in prison, now devotes his time to diverting individuals away from criminal gang activity. Police officers and youth workers also involved in prevention and diversion were interviewed. Common themes emerge from the semi-structured interviews conducted and these are analysed in more detail.

Chapter 7 is a discussion about the implications of the findings in relation to answering the overall research question.

Chapter 8, the Conclusion, is a reflective account of both the overall processes and particulars of the study, and discusses the practical implications of the research. This final chapter further positions this study in the context of escalating youth violence in London and asks judicious questions about the future opportunities for gang desistance and workable interventions.

It is now time to make a more detailed examination of mediation and explore its outcomes when used as an intervention to reduce gang violence.
Chapter 2 Research Context

“There is no generic form of gang, only similarities among diverse forms” (Klein, 1996:71).

This chapter will outline why this research is so important in the current climate. It will explain the motivation behind this study and demonstrate how experiences guided this investigation towards gangs and interventions to reduce violent offending. The examination of a single intervention, mediation, and its outcomes when directed at those involved in gang violence will also be explored. The significance of etymology associated with the word gang will also be examined in order to demonstrate the level of interventions and resources authorities are willing to commit when tackling gang related activity, particularly in London. The make-up of gangs in London will be explored and an examination of the various groups that co-exist cheek – by – jowl on London’s streets.

Positioning myself in the research

As a serving officer, A Detective Superintendent, in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), having been involved in prevention and enforcement activity to reduce gang violence in one role or another for 24 years, I am acutely aware of the impact crime and gang violence has on communities. It is hoped that the findings of this research can ultimately be used to inform those involved in commissioning, directing and funding successful workable interventions that will have the most significant effect on issues surrounding gang membership
and crimes committed in London. Additionally, the findings could be used to provide the various Local Authorities with a more informed view, which is necessary when making decisions on where to direct or divert resources and funding on initiatives to tackle serious youth violence and prevent further murders of young people by young people in the capital.

My motivation for this research stems from a study completed as part of my initial Professional Doctorate studies, where I examined reoffending levels on gang members in Camden (Phelps, 2011). I had become interested in gang intervention programmes since 2009 having had responsibility for promoting mediation as an intervention tactic across 32 boroughs in London, without really establishing what the critical success factors were and what was its impact on violence and local crime patterns. Working with several partner agencies in Camden, proactive teams were deployed and utilised to disrupt gang-related offences. From a professional perspective, many violent incidents occurring in London are gang related. Often violence is used “to achieve and maintain status and respect” (Harris, Turner, Garrett, & Atkinson, 2011: ii).

The police role I have had has given me access to how gangs are policed and controlled from a variety of perspectives and because of my position and responsibilities within the MPS, I have worked with Probation; the Courts; the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS); the Department of Children and Young Families (DCYF) and Youth Offending Services (YOS), I have been given access to a plethora of professionals with many years’ experience in dealing with young people and crime. For this research project, advantage of the
connections made was taken in order to tap into the reservoir of knowledge from those working at the coalface of crime prevention.

One of the most engaged roles I had with gang related violence and subsequently interventions to reduce offending was in Camden in 2011. As crime manager (Detective Chief Inspector, managing a team of over 150 people, with responsibility for serious acquisitive crime investigation and reduction, I saw how these units contributed to the enhancement of police knowledge of gang activity and youth offending in general. The burglary and motor vehicle unit dealt with investigations concerning these crime types. Empirically, police intelligence suggested gang members are involved in this type of crime at all levels. The burglaries are often opportunistic and the thefts of vehicles such as mopeds are used to facilitate their robbery activities. There is an on-going trend in Camden for gang members to ride pillion on stolen mopeds and ride past unsuspecting victims in order to snatch their smart phone, which is the item of choice for today’s robber. 59% of all robberies between 1st August 2007 and July 2010 targeted phones (Coulson, 2010).

The robbery unit is made up of a robbery response patrol and an investigative branch. The former was set up in order to provide a fast-time response to victims of robbery, in the hope that by facilitating a “drive-around”, the recently robbed victim is able to identify individual(s) responsible for the act soon after it occurs. The Warrants unit executes arrest warrants, and their primary function is to detain individuals, often gang members, responsible for large numbers of crimes and to produce them at court at the earliest opportunity,
thereby reducing their opportunity to re-offend. The Borough Intelligence Unit collates, assesses and analyses the intelligence coming into the Borough on gang activity. They have other responsibilities, but in relation to gangs they create a nominal list of the most prolific and known offenders. They also collate information about gangs; produce a weekly gang tension monitoring report and look at cross-border activity. They also provide detailed quantitative analysis on crime patterns, comparing past data and looking forward, predicting offending patterns based on identified trends. This analysis assists in decision making around future operations and deployment of resources. A Test Purchase unit put together operations aimed at capturing first-hand evidence on drug dealing. These operations are extremely successful in drug hot spots such as Camden, which has one of the largest open drug markets in Europe (camden.gov.uk 2008-11) The issues surrounding gang membership in Camden, a single borough in London, are many and varied, but that is not to say empirically unique.

According to the Camden Treatment Plan Strategic Summary of Adult Drug Misuse 2010/2011,

“Camden has a high prevalence of drugs misuse. Camden’s estimated prevalence of crack and/or opiates use is the fifth highest in London. There are an estimated 26 problem drug users (PDUs) per 1,000 Camden residents aged between 15-64. Camden also has the highest rates of injecting drug use in London – 43% (1,872) of estimated drug users are thought to be injecting” (p1).

Drug dealing is an integral part of gang culture (Siegel & Welsh, 2011).
Prior to undertaking the Crime Manager's role in Camden, I worked as Operations Lead as a Detective Chief Inspector at the Specialist Crime Directorate at New Scotland Yard. One of the roles was to deliver mediation as a tactic to Borough Detective Chief Inspectors. The Metropolitan Police Authority, together with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) set up a community interest company called Capital Conflict Management (CCM). This non-profit making company employs mediators who specialise in resolving inter and intra-gang conflict.

For the thesis, the author decided to return to this tactic to review its effectiveness in greater detail. This research will explore this single intervention method, namely mediation and present the yet unknown indicative outcomes of this tactic, when used as an intervention for violence reduction in the community, through detailed analysis. Thorough research identifying the outcomes and potential benefits of mediation as an Intervention to reduce gang violence is lacking in the UK, and indeed, worldwide. This research aims to close the gap that exists regarding the outcomes and benefits of mediation when used to reduce violence through a mixed method approach (Robson, 2011).

Data from 123 individuals referred for mediation have been analysed and the results will be published here for the first time. To bolster the validity of the analysis, this thesis also provides interview data from those conducted with conflict engagement specialists; crime analysts, police officers and staff involved in the referral process, including an interview with an ex-gang member, in an attempt to appreciate the process and outcomes from their
viewpoint.

National data of referred subjects into accredited conflict resolution programmes has, up until now, not been widely available for scrutiny or examination and any benefits or good practices identified as a result, has yet to be shared or developed further to inform public policy. The MPS commissioned an evaluation in 2010 conducted by an external consultancy company, Tribal, that evaluated 11 referrals. This evaluation did not sufficiently measure over a significant period of time the outcome of such referrals. It only conducted checks on nominals over a 3-month period to see if they had committed an offence, which barely reflects a meaningful analysis and is rather limited.

In order to access the necessary information I would need in order to carry out this research, i.e. data concerning individuals referred and not referred for mediation, it was necessary to contact the MPS research and development strategy department for ethical approval. One goal was to examine how this research could advise those involved in commissioning intervention projects and those involved in violence reduction, towards making informed evidence based decisions, on the appropriate measures required to reduce gang violence. Cognisant that any type of research should address a knowledge gap, (Ellis & Levy, 2009) a survey of relevant journal articles revealed an intensely detailed area of study which focuses on gang membership and violent offending levels in London and more generally, the UK (Pitts, 2007; Harding, 2014; & Densley, 2015).

Mediation is seen as a powerful intervention, used at the highest level as an
intervention to stop major world conflicts. (West, 2012). For example, the UN appointed Sir Tony Blair as the Special Envoy for the Middle East for the Quartet, a post he held until recently, following his resignation as Prime Minister of the U.K. in 2007, to assist with Arab-Israeli Conflict using mediation. The Quartet on the Middle East, sometimes called the Diplomatic Quartet or Madrid Quartet or simply the Quartet, is a foursome of nations and international and supranational entities, involved in mediating the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Quartet is made up of representatives from the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Russia. The group was established in Madrid in 2002 as a result of the escalating conflict in the Middle East (Quartet, 2012). If Mediation is a suitable intervention for resolving world wars between warring nations, why would it not be suitable for resolving local turf wars between rival gangs?

One of many issues identified in this study is the scepticism surrounding mediation as useful tactic for resolving violent conflicts, from Government level to local authority level across London (West, 2012). It is slowly gaining recognition with chief officers in the MPS, who currently are gatekeepers to its future, being the major funders of mediation in London. A few innovative local authorities have seen the benefits and commit minor investment, providing those green shoots of hope for future growth and acceptance. Other local authorities within London who suffer major gang issues, have not commissioned mediation (Simons, 2015). The reasons for this is outside the scope of this study, but from personal experience and interaction with those responsible for commissioning interventions, the reasons appear to be

---

3 Interview with Bethan West CCM November 14th 2012.
centred around fiscal constraints; scepticism surrounding the delivery of the tactic; or a belief in better alternatives currently being delivered in the USA, such as iterations of Operation Ceasefire favoured by the current Mayor, Boris Johnson.

There are some distinctive aspects of mediation, such as working with groups and specifically gangs that require particular attention and approaches. Conventionally, a general approach to managing youth violence was to build relationships between individuals (interpersonal conflict resolution). In the past five to ten years, there has been a significant increase in not-for-profit agencies and individuals working in communities, refining the mediation process. Gang intervention specialists believe that group decision-making process have a positive impact in resolving gang-related violence. Gang intervention specialists or conflict engagement specialists, interact with street gangs so that they can get involved when conflict does occur between rival gangs and therefore prevent an increase in hostility. This mediation occurs in the context of violence, either existing or pending.

Capital Conflict Management (CCM) has identified various categories of mediation in the youth context. They include specific mediation between peers, youths and the adults in their daily lives. They deal with individual mediation concerning conflict between individuals because conflict engagement specialists are frequently called upon to resolve this type of conflict.

CCM has a cadre of trained conflict engagement specialists with the
necessary understanding of the local gang structure and dynamics specifically. Many have a background which allows them to provide the necessary support to individuals and youth generally in the areas where they operate and as time goes on, these individuals build the necessary contacts and knowledge that support exit strategies for individuals wanting to exit gangs. They are able to provide support about the availability of alternatives: alternatives to violence and alternatives to their current lifestyle, such as community, leisure and employment opportunities.

In general, mediation requires going to each side of a dispute, and then to and fro between the groups (Shuttle Mediation). Locations for meetings are very important, and should be neutral. Initially, a conflict engagement specialist will often be required to go into the gang area of each party, although alternative neutral locations can often be arranged. For instance, CCM’s offices may be suitable, as well as recreation centres, libraries, coffee shops etc.

The facilitative approach to mediation is the approach adopted by CMM. Mediators using this style of mediation do not judge the actions of the warring parties and neither do they offer recommendations for solutions to the conflict. The role of the mediators using the facilitative style is to structure and lead the process of interaction between the parties, to ask questions, help clarify the issues, search for common interests. Their goal is to help the parties create a final agreement. CCM’s conflict engagement specialists believe that this approach generally leads to a mutually acceptable resolution, which is an agreement with assurances that the parties have developed on their own and that they will therefore most likely adhere to.
The Conflict engagement specialists delivering mediation in intergroup conflicts can be former gang members who have become gang intervention specialists. They can do what law enforcement cannot do because of their status as former gang members who are trusted by their neighbourhoods. Law enforcement generally cannot go into these communities and mediate peace between warring gangs. This is mainly due to how law enforcement personnel are perceived in communities - as enforcers and punishers of crime and also due to the fact that law enforcement officers have to act on information of law breaking which could be detrimental in a mediation context. Gangs will not approach the police to ask them to help them resolve their conflicts because traditionally the police have been regarded as an enemy, authority figure or even a gang rival. The gang intervention specialists at CCM have the community’s trust and generally have or can get the requisite knowledge about the community where the conflict is occurring. They often know whom to contact to help get a resolution in difficult situations. They are able to enter a conflict situation in a community and enter into dialogue with residents who may be too afraid or not wish to communicate with authority figures. Conflict engagement specialists can be effective by upholding a key principle of mediation, which is confidentiality, which allows them to gain full trust in the communities where they operate.

Mediators are neutral and have no stake in the outcome. The warring parties, not the mediator, decide the outcome. The parties themselves must come up with how and what they will agree on to resolve the issue. If mediators feel they cannot be neutral they step back and hand over to others who can.
Some mediation with gangs is achieved by going to and fro between both sides. There are times when both sides never actually sit together, but the conflict is resolved through shuttle mediation.

Sometimes the shuttle mediation process can take many meetings, but often it can be resolved in fewer sessions. It is possible to get a truce without bringing people into the same room. Some parties will never be ready to sit down in the same room with others. Sometimes it’s possible to find something to bring to the table, which can be brought back to the other side, for instance, to agree at least to stop the warring.

The MPS first commissioned mediation in 2009 and Tribal, who evaluated the period of interventions for 2010, reviewed it positively. However, mediation was not evaluated more than once. Tribal concluded in 2010 that mediation had prevented one murder (2011). This was with a £600 000 investment. This study will provide further evidence of this. The question policy makers must address is how much investment are they prepared to make to save a young person’s life? And to put this in some context, “a homicide costs £1,774,681 just to investigate” (Home Office, 2011:8).

The police role in the mediation process is a significant one. Currently the MPS provides the main referral route into CMM and all the analytical and intelligence capability to facilitate informed risk management of the situation. There are those who argue the role of the police is to enforce the law or provide crime prevention advice or crime avoidance advice, but are moving into the realms of work historically dealt with by social services (Walker, 1997; Lipskey, 1993).
In an article by that appeared in the Daily Express, entitled, “The Police Should be Law Enforcers not Social Workers” (2013), Pollard, writing in response to Tom Windsor being appointed Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary, stated that “the police are consciously behaving more like social workers and less like, well, police”.

Tom Windsor speaking about the responsibilities of parents to teach their children right from wrong, speaking to the Royal united Services Institute think tank stated, “Officers should spend more time preventing crime so they would have to focus less on catching criminals” (2013).

This is a debate that needs further discussion which outside the scope of this research, but it was a major consideration when the intervention was at its planning stage that the MPS should really distant itself as much as possible from the detail of the process. Indeed, there is a firewall that exists between the information that is gleaned by CCM operatives and intelligence that could come back into the MPS as a result of the mediation, for the sake of ethics and trust. CCM have to provide certain guarantees to those with whom they engage, namely, that the content of their conversations is confidential and the only time there is any breach of that confidentiality is if there is a risk of harm or danger to anyone (Simon, 2012).
Introducing Gangs

This section will consider the evolving debate around the definition, meaning and threat posed by gangs in London. For the most part of the 20th Century, gangs were certainly considered a problem particular to the United States of America (Klein, Kerner, Maxson & Witkamp, 2001; Klein, 2012). Gangs became increasingly prevalent in London and across major cities in England and Scotland towards the latter part of the 20th Century. However, identifying what is and what is not a gang has been a specific issue for police officers, especially when there is little consensus, amongst academics as to what constitutes a gang. Pitts (2012) proposes that the “hallmark of the contemporary debate about youth gangs in both mainstream and left-liberal criminology in the UK is its apparent scepticism about the very existence of such an entity” (P 27).

This is an interesting viewpoint, but one that supports the split in current thinking in the UK about the gang problem. On one hand there are those who agree with Pitts, like former MPS Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, and findings published in the Centre for Social Justice (2009) that believe the threats gangs pose are real and increasing, whilst others believe gangs have always formed part of modern UK culture (Adridge and Medina, 2008; Hallsworth and Young, 2008) but the panic mainly induced by media sensationalism makes it difficult to establish the true extent of the problem and what it actually means. (Isaacs et al, 2014).

The fact that Home Office does not systematically collect and collate data specifically related to gangs (Young, 2014) does not make it any easier to
determine the true extent of the gang problem in the UK today.

However, from personal knowledge, as a senior officer in the MPS, I would support the argument posited by Pitts et al. that says “…violent youth gangs do exist and their existence poses a serious threat to the safety, well-being, and in some cases the lives, of the children, young people and adults who live in gang-affected neighbourhoods (Bullock and Tilley, 2002; Youth Justice Board, 2007; Palmer and Pitts, 2006; Pitts, 2008; Matthews and Pitts 2007; Palmer, 2009; Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Balasunderam, 2009; Pitts, 2011)’ (Pitts, 2012: 32).

Significant inroads with respect to intelligence surrounding gang prevalence in the capital have been made. The MPS currently collates information on over 250 gangs, identifying 60 as potentially high risk and criminally active in the capital. Analysis following the London Riots of 2011 indicated that 19% of those arrested for the disorder, as identified by the Operation Withern investigation, were gang members, many of who belong to London’s most high-risk gangs. If, as former Police Commissioner Ian Blair suggested, youth violence is the second biggest threat facing the capital after terrorism (Sunday Times, 2013), then more research is needed in this area to identify the effort that goes into supressing them.
Defining the meaning of “gangs” for this study

Before determining the outcomes of using mediation to reduce gang violence in the Metropolitan Police Area of London, it is necessary to provide some further background into the nature of street gangs in London, in particular, describing what these gangs look like; how they operate; and why do people join gangs? It is also necessary to describe the current gang situation in London today, which prompted this study. This research will not cover organised criminal networks, (OCNs) also referred to as organised criminal groups, per se, (whilst accepting that some gangs are indeed OCNs, as will be discussed later). This is because OCNs and street gangs have different risks associated with them.

OCNs can be described as

“Those involved, normally working with others, in continuing serious criminal activities for substantial profit, whether based in the UK or elsewhere” (SOCA, 2012).

Shropshire and McFarquar argue that OCNs are crime firms that come together specifically to engage in criminal activity whilst street gangs form for a variety of social and psychological reasons and engage in wide range of group activities above and beyond their criminal dealings (Shropshire & McFarquar, 2002).

Many of the street gangs in London are not OCNs even though some do run successful business enterprises such as a prestigious car hire rental company.
or a gentlemen’s barbershop as evident in Camden Borough (Phelps 2011).

A study entitled “The Gang and Beyond”, carried out by London Metropolitan University (LMU) contends why it is important to differentiate between street gangs and other organised crime groups as it “…helps to identify the appropriate response and efforts that should be put towards a specific group” (London Councils, 2012:4). This is a valid observation. Through better understanding of the type and extent of gang organization, whilst acknowledging their “dynamic, flexible, ever changing” nature (Sanders, 1994: xi), interventions can be tailored to address the threat posed.

These Street Gangs fit the ideas expressed by Skolnick et al. (1990), Padilla (1993), Jankowski (1991) and Taylor (2008). They depict some gangs as being “well-organised entrepreneurs who employ traditional economic strategies of marketing, structure and amassing profits that are reinvested in the gang” (Decker, Bynum & Weisel, 1998: 74).

Conversely, in more recent years however, a number of research projects in areas like Strathclyde, Manchester and London have identified the presence of gangs in the UK, as being groups of feckless youths, disparate and disorganised with no formal leaders. This is reflected in Mares’ (2001) ethnographic study of two gangs in Manchester. These gangs were both loosely organised and had no formal leaders. Many of the gangs that operate in London, in my experience belong to this feckless unstructured type rather than the well-oiled machines described above.
Recent studies by Hallsworth & Silverstone (2009) and Densley (2013) describe youths as being “on road”. This is a term commonly used by young people to describe a person that spends much of their time on the street. It has a negative connotation. Those ‘on road’ frequently hang out on street corners, speaking in slang, and often engage in illegal behavior (Canaan Project, 2013).

Gunter’s 2010 study posits the significance of “Road Culture” in a gang setting, and describes how young black people’s identities; lifestyles, experiences and transitions are played out in a public setting on the streets and in housing estates. These individuals are involved in “badness” and the young people themselves identify as being involved in violence, crime and drug dealing. They believe they have few choices in society. Either become a victim of crime and violence or survive (Runnymede Perspectives, 2011)

European and UK gang research was largely influenced by Malcolm Klein who, via the formation of the Eurogang Project prompted European Countries to invest further in gang research to identify the extent and level of such issues in the UK and Europe, so that comparable analysis with US interventions could be made (Decker & Weerma, 2005).

Smithson et al conclude that, “United Kingdom-based research has identified the presence of discernible groups engaged in criminal activity and weapons use. However, descriptions of the nature and organization of these groups vary considerably” (Smithson, Ralphs, & Williams, 2013). Thrasher stated in his ethnographic seminal study of 1,313 Chicago gangs that no two gangs are exactly alike. (Thrasher, 1927). Hagedorn (1988) Klein, Maxson and
Cunningham (1991), describe street gangs operating independently, egotistically inspired by the rewards of drug dealing. Other literature describes gangs as consisting of individuals who engage in exaggerated versions of adolescent behaviour, who rebel against their parents; use drugs and alcohol; and commit acts of graffiti or vandalism (Huff, 1989; Fagan, 1989).

Identifying further issues around what is a gang and what is not, one only has to consider an incident described by Sanday (1990). She describes how a well-organised group of older adolescents were accused of committing a gang rape in Philadelphia. She notes that prior to this incident, the group were already well established in the neighbourhood; notorious for having “problematic behaviour”. Women had repeatedly reported verbal abuse from them when passing a row of benches that they frequented, establishing the area as their turf. Sanday notes (p71) that all members were enrolled in school, yet the group allocated some special status to those who performed poorly. New members of the community were often warned about the group and women were urged to consider the potential dangers of attending parties regularly thrown by them. Bursik and Grasmick sum up the incident by saying,

“To many, this short description has all the classic popular descriptions of a gang...However, we have left one very important piece of information…these were all members of a prominent fraternity at a prestigious, upper-middle class university; the neighbourhood in
question was a campus community in Philadelphia” (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993:2).

Sanday (1990) goes on to clarify that this incident is alleged as the accused were never brought to trial. She provides evidence of the discrepancies that exist between the rich, upper-middle classes of society and the conviction rates of the poorer, lower classes of comparable black youths in her study of gang rape in the US. These inconsistencies in treatment between groups by the state may explain why perceptions of what is and what is not considered to be a street gang is not so straightforward.

If researchers are to identify gangs as only existing in socio-economically deprived areas or neighbourhoods that are ethnically diverse, there is a danger that explanations of gang membership will be confined to these areas of poverty and ethnicity, the broader issue of gang membership in London as a whole will be become neglected.

Defining gang membership can be problematic. After almost 100 years scholars are still unable to agree who is and who is not a gang member. (See Thrasher, 1927; Klein (1971); Haskell and Yablonsky (1974) Miller (1982) Curry and Spergel (1988) Hallsworth and Young (2008)) and there is still little consensus amongst practitioners as to what constitutes a gang.

Many definitions erroneously seek to determine membership by placing emphasis on the number of meetings and amount of contact between
individual gang members (Miller, 1982; Short, 1990; Huff, 1993).

The existence of an obvious leader is another method used to define a gang (Johnstone, 1981; Miller, 1982; Spergel, 1984). The volume of its members is another factor, and most definitions portray a gang as being a group (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1971; Decker & Curry, 2000).

However, Klein singles out a more coherent feature of gang membership, stating “The communal feature that unites the various definitions of what comprises a gang, require that its origins and essential purpose for being is its involvement in criminal activity “ (Klein, 1971:116).

This sentiment is echoed by Spergel, who posits, “There is no question that the major criterion used by many audiences in the definition of gang is the groups’ participation in illegal behaviour” (1990:179).

Klein also attempts to encompass many of the surfeits of definitions that have emerged over the years by describing five different types of gangs: Traditional, Neoclassical; Compressed; Collective; and Specialty. (Klein, 1996:65). He believes gangs are determined by characteristics such as their duration; their size; presence of subgroups; age range of members; focus on territorial boundaries; and commission of specific crime types. Many of these characteristics are adopted and built upon by other academics and centres for research (as detailed in this chapter) in order to present their distinct definitions to collectively identify what constitutes a gang and what describes
a gang member. No two gangs are exactly the same and whilst eminent scholars, like Klein find innovative ways of characterising them as a collective, or group, it is important, certainly for this piece of research, to describe a gang rather than define what is and what is not a gang or gang member.

In the UK, a well-documented definition of what is a gang is attributed to the authors Hallsworth and Young, who describe a street gang as being

“… a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are recognized by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is intrinsic to identity and practice. The minimal characteristic features of the gang then, are that it has a) a name, b) a propensity to inflict violence and engage in crime where c) violence and delinquency performs a functional role in promoting group identity and solidarity.” (2006: 68)

This definition was one of the first to influence policy and practice in the UK and resulted in the Metropolitan Police Service initially identifying 171 gangs in the Greater London area. (Young, Fitzgibbon, & Silverstone, 2014)

In 2004, The Rt. Hon. Ian Duncan Smith, set up the Centre for Social Justice and their definition of what constitutes a gang is also, often cited and incorporates location and conflict within its meaning:

A relatively durable, predominately street-based group of young people who:
- See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group,
- Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence,
- Identify with or lay claim over territory,
- Have some form of identifying structural feature and
- Are in conflict with other, similar gangs.

(Centre for Social Justice 2009: 21)

The UK Gangs Working Group, which formed in 2009, is made up of “prominent academics, practitioners and policy makers who have expertise in the relevant fields”. They maintain that they “consult nationally and internationally, especially with charities and social enterprises, who are the champions of the welfare society” (Centre for Social Justice, 2009:2).

This working group attempted to introduce a common definition to be used by all those involved in tackling gangs to end this lexicon confusion, thus enabling meaningful comparative analysis between the various different studies and interventions in place. The current Government has continued adopting the Gangs Working Group’s five-point definition and it is the definition chosen for the recent Ending Gang and Youth Violence report 2011 (Home Office, 2011).

Using the definitions adopted by the MPS Specialist Crime Directorate, who were responsible for drafting the reference toolkit for police and partners, for the purpose of this research, a gang member is
“...someone who has been identified as being a member of a gang and this is corroborated by intelligence from more than one source (e.g. police, partner agencies or community intelligence)” (Tarrant, 2009:24)

There are definitions that try to determine what the various factions of a gang are. For example, a gang associate is defined as

“...someone who offends with gang members or who is associated by police, partner agencies, or community intelligence, with gang members or who has displayed through conduct or behaviour, a specific desire or intent to become a member of a gang” (p.24)

In December 2014, The Serious Crime Bill introduced a new simplified definition of a gang member:

“... the key features of a gang under the new section would be a group which:

consists of at least three people;

has one or more characteristics which enable its members to be identified by others as a group; and

engages in gang-related violence or is involved in the illegal drug market “
(Serious Crime Bill, 2014: 25).

Then there are definitions which seek to establish what a gang crime is. The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime suggest that ‘any gang related crimes or gang related incidents or such events where any individual believes that there is a link to the activities of a gang or gangs (MOPAC, 2015:1)
Those who work closely with gangs identify members by the way in which they operate. They discuss how Street Gangs have their own identity, their own language, which sets them apart from mainstream society. They use words such as Beef to mean dispute or feud, Bling to denote their unique Gangster style, usually symbolised by gaudy, ostentatious jewellery. They operate collectively in Crews or Posses, which are terms for Gangs. Their leaders are called Face and more established members called Elders and their followers’ who operate on the street are known as soldiers. The new recruits or mid-level gang members are called Youngers, whilst aspiring recruits, usually very young in age (under 10) are known as Tiny. Their territory where they hang out or operate is called Endz or Turf. There is great emphasis placed on Rep, which means reputation and any perceived affront to this is often a root cause for violence, which inevitably follows. They are individually identifiable by symbols such as graffiti tags or colours ⁴ (see also Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Hallsworth and Young, 2011).

In June 2015, the Government simplified what a gang is legislatively, to make it less prescriptive and more flexible (Bradley, 2015). The previous definition related to geographical areas and gang colours. The new definition means that only one of the criteria now needs to be satisfied which enables a gang member to be so identified by others (see above). This makes it easier for the authorities to apply for gang injunctions to prevent further illicit activity occurring through controlled measures.

---

⁴ Informal conversation with CCM Operations Manager Andy Simon, November 8th 2012}
The various definitions put forward by academics highlight the ever changing and ever evolving nature of what is a gang and what is a gang member. There has been an incessant need to capture all the relevant characteristics of a gang, to enable those charged with keeping communities safe the ability to identify the necessary interventions that would have the greatest impact. Some definitions, like the Eurogang definition, are flawed in that they are too rigid, particularly in relation to gang durability and geography. The Eurogang Network, established in 1997 is made up of European and American researchers in the field. They work together to develop a common framework for comparative research based on standardised methodological instruments and a common research design. The Eurogang network reached a consensus on defining a gang (Weerman et al., 2009), understanding the importance of an agreed definition for comparative research. In so doing, they have been able to produce some enlightening findings in relation to gang violence being more complex and destructive when compared to non-gang violence (Klein et al., 2006).

The specific definitions of what constitutes a gang and who is a gang member are confusing. This is mainly due to so many interested parties (such as politicians, the media and academics) adopting various definitions (Ebsen et al., 2001; Spergel, 1995), which ultimately lead to an inaccurate media and public official’s view of gangs (Horowitz, 1990)
So, in summary and in keeping with the new Home Office Serious Crime Bill definition of 2014, for the purpose of this research, a gang is a group or a peer association of three or more people who have a common identity (often, but not restricted to, other visible membership symbols such as colours or graffiti tags); they are made up of individuals who identify with each other as being gang members; who operate in a clandestine way; much of what they are involved in is known only to the group and they are involved in illegal activity which includes but is not limited to drug dealing and violence. For the purpose of this research it is necessary to provide a more detailed definition than the one presented in the serious crime bill to differentiate between low level youths offending generally, and gang members at the extreme end of the offending scale, who are the intended subject of this research.

Having described what a gang is for the purposes of this research in the following section, the reasons why young people seek gang membership are examined.

**Why do young people join gangs?**

The overall aim of this thesis is not to examine in detail why young people join gangs. However, by way of context, it is worth touching on some of the theoretical perspectives that exist, in order to provide background knowledge against which an individual’s response to mediation can be further explored.
A survey of theoretical perspectives examining why individuals join gangs reveal a number of themes. These will be examined below. Three of the themes concentrate on the attractiveness of gangs and the excitement whilst one of the themes focuses on desistance from gangs and delinquency in general. Before exploring these themes further, it is worth noting the risk factors associated with gang membership

In the USA numerous risk factors associated with individuals joining gangs, have been identified. These range from early exposure to violence either as a victim or witness, (Kratcoski, 1982, Lewis, Balla & Shanok, 1976; 1994; Kaufman and Cicchetti, 1989; Paschall, Ennet & Flewelling 1996); alcohol and drug abuse (Battin, Hill, Abbott & Catalano, 1998); lack of parental supervision or absent parent (Walker - Barnes, & Mason, 2001); or siblings already involved in gangs and violent offending (Decker & Curry, 2000), to name a few. Young people are being also being exploited and actively recruited by gangs and feel pressurised into joining them (Vigil, 2002).

The risk factors associated with membership can be grouped within five natural domains, which are individual, family, peer, school and neighbourhood. Those who are at high risk, thinking about some of the factors detailed above, will be more at risk without a counterbalancing positive influence who could act as a deterrent and steer individuals away from gang life (such as a positive role model or teacher at school). An evaluation of over 20 studies conducted by Klein and Maxson (2006) suggest peer networks as a significant high risk factor:
“Having delinquent friends is a noted risk factor for gang joining and exerts an influence net of other risk factors” (p147).

A study by the Gang Free Project in Los Angeles (2013) cite six risk factors that increase the odds of a young person joining a gang:

- Lack of jobs for youth
- Poverty compounded by social isolation
- Domestic violence
- Negative peer networks
- Lack of parental supervision
- Early academic failure and lack of school attachment.

Jankowski (1991:23-26) argues that gang members come from deprived inner city slums and the conditions they endure lead to those individuals having a particular character trait that he calls ‘defiant individualism”. These attributes include competitiveness, mistrust, emotional detachment, independence and the need to survive. Jankowski’s Darwin-type view on individuals competing for limited resources whilst appearing on the face of it, logical, provides little empirical evidence to support this.

The Centre for Social Justice suggests class and anomie is one reason why young people seek out gang membership.
“Young people from dysfunctional families who live in deprived areas of high unemployment, crime and violence and who are marginalised from mainstream society can potentially find opportunity, status and wealth through joining a gang” (The Centre for Social Justice, 2009:35).

If we accept that the risks identified in the United States are indeed mirrored in the UK, the idea that gang members evolve from low-income, diverse populations, living in deprived areas of the UK is wanting. This is because most young people from such areas in similar circumstances do not become gang members.

As Klein (1995:75-6) notes,

"There is a selection process that results in 1 percent, or 5 percent, or 10 or even 20 percent of gang-age youths choosing the gang option while the majority select themselves out".

So why do some individuals join gangs and others not? In order to develop a theoretical framework that examines the reasons why young people are drawn into street gangs, it is necessary to explore the pushing and pulling levers that lead to this event. Getting involved in gangs can be the beginning of a cyclical process that can ruin a young person’s life. With a criminal record it can be harder to get a job or progress into further education. Being caught up in violent incidents can lead to getting arrested, sent to prison, seriously injured or even killed. Many criminological theories exist which attempt to determine
why young people join gangs. Some of these theories will be explored in more detail below.

Existing theories, which are more generally delinquency based, go some way towards explaining why and how individuals become involved with gangs. What follows is broadly four principal reasons that can describe why individuals become involved in gangs.

The first, “control theory” explains why individuals desist from joining. These complex factors that prevent gang membership are seen as being opposite to the risk factors described above that draw individuals into the world of gangs (Silvestri et al., 2009:17). Control theory seeks to examine why individuals keep to the rules and desist from offending as opposed to many criminology theories, which focus on why individuals offend. In contrast, individuals learn not to commit criminal acts through the development of close social bonds and adherence to societal norms. They accept the rules determined by convention and society itself. These are known as protective factors (Huff, 1989).

A reason why individuals join gangs can be attributed to the idea of rebellion and excitement and can be linked to “strain theory”. This idea suggests that the pressures and conventional norms of today’s society make youths come together to rebel against society. They establish their own subculture, and normalise their behaviour, reinforcing their hedonistic gang lifestyle (Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965). Young people join
gangs to relax, rebel and revel, giving the idea that to belong to a gang is seductive and thrilling (Reimer, 1994).

Cohen (1955) observed gangs living amongst groups of disadvantaged lower class populations in which they desired the trappings of the middle classes. These youths could never succeed against the “middle class measuring rod” (Cohen, 1955:28). A “criminal subculture emerged” (Fagan, 1989) where gangs emerged as a response to class-based social strains (Klein, 1971).

In a city like London, there are extreme voids between the very richest in society and the very poor. There are more billionaires in London than in any other city in the world (Barber, 2015). The average price of a three-bedroom property in Central London is around £1 million. The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith suggested, “that ghettos” of poor quality social housing, ignored by the middle classes, were a factor in the London riots of 2011 (The Guardian, 2011). “Strain theory” suggests those who join gangs do so because they have little aspiration or belief that they will ever get a decent education, a good job; or own a place of their own in the city. They rebel against what society norms promote.

A third theme is associated with attachment and belonging. The idea of individuals getting involved with gangs stems from the idea first posited by Thrasher (1927) and subsequently by Shaw and McKay (1942) which suggests youth gangs evolve as a result of natural association and are normal characteristics in urban disorganisation and intergroup conflict areas (Hipp,
Tita, Bogess, 2009). This idea suggests that individuals come together out of a need to create order in the “community disorganisation” (Thrasher, 1926:7) in which they find themselves.

Throughout 2013/4, The Evening Standard Newspaper ran a series of articles dedicated to heightening awareness of gang membership in London, highlighting the reality that some young people face on a daily basis. One such article provided some insight, depicting the life of a gang member known as Ricky and explored his motivation for joining a notorious London Gang (Cohen, 2013). Ricky was recently released from prison following a 15-month sentence for causing grievous bodily harm. He had endured a violent childhood at the hands of his abusive father and had been diagnosed with ADHT at the age of six. Alienated from mainstream society and with no strong family ties, one “family” welcomed him in. They were known as the PDC — the Poverty Driven Children, Pussy Drugs Cash or the Peel Dem Crew — and from age 13 they became his substitute family.

“It was a big gang, over 100 people, and I was just a younger. But I became a core member and that got me protection from other gangs on my back and I made easy money, several grand a week. We sold crack, heroin, weed, cocaine. I ain’t gonna lie, it was fun at the time. I felt untouchable and did my first armed robbery at 13” (2013).

Young people join gangs to fulfil their basic need for attachment; to belong; to be intimate; to fit in; for respect. (Cresswell & Piano Clark, 2011; Maxwell,
In London, where many families come seeking employment or fleeing war and persecution from overseas, many find themselves housed in some of the most deprived areas of London with fragmented communities and disparate community ties. The absence of a common language or culture alienates large sections of society and may explain why sections of society feeling marginalised by the masses, form close bonds and friendships with individuals in similar situations. Gangs offer that missing sense of commonality and belonging that the majority of society enjoys and through community and peer pressure, the vast majority of the populous desist from committing criminal or more specifically, violent acts.

A fourth theme is linked to money and status. Some researchers, such as Pitts (2008) argue that young people build respect and achieve status on the street through gang membership. Status is earned through violence, which is usually linked to drugs, which is a very lucrative business. The Centre for Social Justice (2009:35) support this idea by asserting,

“Young people from dysfunctional families who live in deprived areas of high unemployment, crime and violence and who are marginalised from mainstream society can potentially find’ opportunity, status and wealth through joining a gang”

In areas of London where there is much deprivation, a lack of job or training opportunities, a section of society feels alienated and excluded from employment or education. When faced with such an existence, individuals
develop a deviant “subcultural solution” (Hopkins Burke, 2008:156) where they construct their own values and norms. The “search for respect, status and money” (The Centre for Social Justice, 2009:58) leads to violent offending. They defend their “turf” or territory in order to deal in drugs. Of course, not all unemployed individuals become criminals. Hopkins Burke (2005) asserts that people “can be unemployed for many years, surviving on a very limited income while remaining law-abiding citizens” (p228). However, there are some researchers who evidence the “correlation between gangs, gang violence and the development of the underclass” (Burke and Sunley, 1998:37).

The Common themes running through these existing theories is the young people who join gangs believe they will be provided with things that would otherwise be unobtainable. Ultimately, all of these theories have their merits but are theories of delinquency and not theories associated wholly with gang membership. Certain individuals have various criminogenic needs, which make them more receptive to gang membership, which in turn leads to pro-offending attitudes and values, aspects of antisocial personality (e.g. impulsiveness), poor problem solving, substance abuse, high hostility and anger, and criminal associates (Chatteriji, 2005).

These theories encompass the many risk factors that are associated with gang membership. Some of these carry more weight, and can be categorised as high, medium or low risk. Nevertheless, in the right set of circumstances, these risks and the existence of an already cohesive gang structure can pull
or push individuals into the street group and the downward spiral of offending and violence begins.

When looking at reasons why individuals join gangs, it is equally valid to examine reasons why individuals leave gangs or desist from offending. Desistance may occur when an individual relinquishes membership as a result of employment, a relationship, or becoming a father (Pyrooz & Decker, 2011). Equally, desistance may occur when an individual has been prosecuted for a criminal offence and their activities may reduce or stop for fear of repercussion (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Desistance will be explored later when examining interventions that are adopted to reduce gang violence.

So, in summary, the reasons young people join gangs in addition to their criminogenic needs are wide and varied. They include; the need to belong; the feeling of being in a family; financial recompense; protection; peer pressure; feeling of excitement; or simply, the feeling of being ‘cool’. Issues such as; family breakdown, a lack of positive male role models, failures in the education system, lack of personal identity, discrimination and poverty also push young people into the gang way of life.

It is important to identify the risk factors associated with gang membership so that the most appropriate individuals can be targeted with interventions at the earliest opportunity rather than customising intervention programmes to deal with problematic gangs. Which brings us on to the specific issues London faces by having gangs operating within the city.
Gangs in London

Existing UK literature is now able to provide a sufficiently robust theoretical framework, necessary to introduce an examination into the make-up and nature of gangs in London and as such, a discussion of the various sources of literature emanating from studies conducted will follow.

According to the Metropolitan Police (May 12th, 2013) there are around 257 recognised gangs in London, which consist of approximately 4,500 people. At the upper end of the spectrum are organised criminal networks, involved in Class A drugs supply and firearms. These types of gangs are not the focus of this study. At the other end of the scale are street-based gangs involved in high impact community crimes, such as violence and personal robbery. This relatively small number of people is responsible for approximately 22% of serious violence, 17% of robbery, 50% of shootings and 14% of rape in London (Dawson, Stanko, Higgins, & Rehman, 2011).

Accepting that London, over the past 35 years, has seen an emergence of “mostly ethnic street gangs involved in the sale of drugs with strong inter-gang rivalry and high levels of street violence” (Shipman, 1997) as mirrored in other UK cities with known gang issues, the qualitative research that I have conducted suggests the evolvement of ethnic blurring. Gangs that once existed in clearly defined post coded territories, whose origins stemmed from ethnic origins, such as the Turkish Gangs and Jamaican Gangs, operating independently now seem to be moving into new areas, pooling their skills and resources to ensure their business model survives.
London, has seen the emergence of violent youth gangs posing specific challenges around serious youth violence, street robberies, anti-social behaviour, as well as violence, particularly in and around schools and colleges is as noticeable. It became a key issue for the Mayor’s Office in 2012, with the launch of the *Anti Gang Strategy (2012)*

Many of these gangs in London can be found in areas of high deprivation, poverty, and immigration. Many of the street gangs evolve or continue to expand in the shadows of the OCNs and crime families that are already in existence. When looking at OCNs and gangs in London, there is a propensity towards “ethnic collectivism”. There are gangs dating back to the 1970s, such as the Ghetto Boys, Peckham Boys and Tottenham ManDem, all of which are made up entirely of black males and females. Asian gangs exist, such as the Brick Lane Massive and Tamil gangs such as Tamil Snake Gang and Wembley Massive. In Tower Hamlet’s Borough, it is estimated that 26 out of 27 gangs are Bangladeshi (Sherman, Gartin, & & Buerger, 1989).

In the following section, the composition of gangs based on ethnicity is described for background. It is largely unreported in academic literature and this knowledge is gleaned from MPS intelligence data basis and problem profiles created for police purposes.

The Daily Telegraph, citing police intelligence data, reported that, of the crime gangs known to Scotland Yard, 24 languages are spoken and
“47% are classed as cultural networks whose members are bound by a common language or homeland” (Leapman, 2006).

The article reports further,

“There are Turkish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Colombian Gangs—whose victims are often from their own communities”.

Two thirds of these gangs are involved in Britain’s £7 billion a year drug trade, whilst others are involved in prostitution, fraud and people smuggling. When the drug lord, Abdullah Baybasin was convicted in January 2006, it was claimed that he and his Kurdish Gang from Eastern Turkey were responsible for controlling 90% of Britain’s heroin supply. (Leapman, 2006)

In North London, Turkish Cypriot crime families can be found, and are a mixture of street gangs and OCNs. Following the substantial immigration of Turkish Cypriots to London in the 1970s, criminal gangs comprised of Turkish Cypriots were formed in poorer neighbourhoods. They are mainly involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and armed robbery. They have more recently been involved in ‘tit-for-tat’ fatal shootings. Turkish Cypriot gang members are also believed to be heavily involved in organised crime targeting business premises through extortion. (Tilley, Hopkins, Edwards, Burrows, 2007)
Information collated by the MPS intelligence unit have identified that Pakistani crime families are mostly of Pashtun or Mirpuri descent, and are involved in large scale heroin trafficking as well as kidnapping, extortion, weapon smuggling and murder. The Pakistani crime groups are one of the main sources of heroin trafficking in the UK, as are the Turkish mafia. They are usually more active in cities such as Bradford, Birmingham and Leeds, where considerable Pakistani communities exist. More recently, Pakistani gangs have been involved in sexual exploitation of predominantly white British girls in cities like Rotherham and Derby.

The Afro-Caribbean crime gangs formed following the arrival of Jamaican immigrants into the UK’s major cities in the 1960s. Criminal gangs known as Yardies were formed in 1980s. Predominantly Jamaican descended groups are active in drug trafficking, mainly cocaine and smuggling of weapons. The original Afro-Caribbean Yardie criminals have also formed groups native to Britain. The Tottenham ManDem is one such example, but many of its members are also mixed race. (Densley & Stevens, 2014)

The Nigerian crime groups in London are mainly of Yoruba and Igbo ancestry and formed criminal gangs in neighbourhoods where there were numerous Nigerians of similar descent. They are mainly involved in cocaine and heroin trafficking, as well as weapon smuggling. Occasionally, there are violent clashes between them and local Afro-Caribbean gangs as is the case with ongoing battles between the mainly Nigerian Peckham Boys and the Afro-Caribbean Ghetto Boys. The Shankstarz and Dem Africans operate in
Edmonton, and it is in this London borough that a 15 year old black male was surrounded and knifed to death in a believed ‘tit-for-tat’ gang dispute in 2011 (Sanders, 1994).

Indian crime families are of Jatt Sikh descent and are more are active in deprived areas of London and the UK, which have communities with a large Indian population, the most notable being Southall in the Metropolitan Police Area, and Slough, just outside in Thames Valley Police Area. They trade in heroin trafficking but are also prolific in protection rackets, usually amongst their own community, VAT scams, credit card frauds and human trafficking. The Holy Smoke and Tooti Nungs are two such London gangs.

The Tamil gangs come from the Tamil immigrant community that recently arrived in the UK, as a result of the conflict in their native Sri Lanka. They are known to be involved in robbery, extortion, credit card fraud and other scams, weapon smuggling and running protection rackets, as well as murder and torture. The Tamil gangs operating in London are notoriously violent and even though they are not majorly involved in drug trafficking, they have diversified, setting up high-level scams that make lots of money. A consequence of this is persistent violent battles in a bid to control the areas where they operate. The Wembley Boys and Tamil Snake Tigers are two such London gangs.

Evidence of the existence of ethnic gangs as can be seen, still prevail, but in recent years, there has been a shift from gangs that have “a greater sense of territorialism” (Cox, 2011) Like the gangs or crews in New York, London
gangs are joining forces, pooling resources to carry out crime to ensure the survival of their business.  

Having discussed the make up of gangs in London, it is now necessary to look at the extent of violence they are involved in.

**The Response to Gang violence in London**

The threat that exists from London gangs changes over time, whilst gang-related violence remains a constant, affecting more and more boroughs in London. Much of the gang violence that exists in the Capital is linked to drug disputes and perceived territorial rights to deal within postcode areas of the city.

According to Hobbs (2013), gangs of youths work together and are increasingly market savvy and ‘the drug trade offers an accessible alternative sphere of enterprise to declining opportunities in traditional male employment’ (p.116). Hobbs writes about a cluster of areas in the East End of London, which he calls Dogtown. He states that here, drug dealing becomes part of everyday life and part of its ‘fabric’ (p.124). These youths seek to ‘locate alternative means of constructing identity, and along the way gain status and respect, generate excitement, have fun – and make money’ (p.125). Unfortunately, along the way this offers opportunities for rivals to disrespect other gang members encroach on each other’s turf and contribute to the

---

5 Meeting with Detective Cesar Diaz, 27th May 2014. NYPD HQ. Brooklyn New York City, NY.
never-ending cycle of violence that accompanies these activities and behavior.

The similarities between street gang entrepreneurship and the activities of organised criminal networks is increasing as new media savvy individuals find easier ways to accumulate wealth through on line fraud and can be more lucrative and less risky than “on road “street dealing (Power, 2014)

The National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime states, “Involvement in street gangs, for example, can lead to involvement in drugs distribution, firearms offences and sexual exploitation (The National Crime Agency, 2015: 8), contributing to the £24 billion a year organised crime costs the UK. Street Gangs have a very significant part to play. The young people who “are also commonly exploited, being recruited to work as runners” (p23) in street gangs. “Children are perceived as inexpensive, easily controlled and less likely to be detected by law enforcement” (p23)

The MPS has established a task force which purports to “work with and for all communities to pursue gangs and gang members, regardless of their background” (MPS, 2013b). This unit is called The MPS Trident Gangs Unit - an expansion of the MPS Trident Unit (which was established to target gun crime in the capital, with a particular focus on shootings related to the illegal sale of drugs, and crime in Afro-Caribbean communities in March 1998, following a series of shootings in Lambeth and Brent). The existing remit of
Trident has been expanded from its focus on shootings into proactively tackling more general gang related offending.

The MPS Trident Gangs Unit aims to identify and pursue those gangs posing most risk to London. It is a proactive unit, which aims to dismantle gangs through a targeted approach. Together with partner agencies, such as housing, health, the department for children and families and local authorities, they aim to identify young people on the periphery of gang involvement and divert them away, by ensuring the right resources are mobilised to intervene (MPS, 2013).

An article in the Evening Standard looking at gang violence in the capital reported that “The full impact of gang crime in London is revealed … by new Met figures showing 6,600 violent offences were committed by gang members in just three years.” (Bentham, 2014; Cohen, 2013).

The violent offending includes

“24 murders, 28 attempted killings, 170 firearms offences, as well as stabbings and kidnappings. Other offences include grievous bodily harm with a weapon and also robbery. Each of the violent crimes was carried out by one of 3,484 gang members logged on an official Met database. (MPS, 2013a)

The MPS recognised that gang membership and criminality associated with it, is not a problem it can tackle alone. Enforcement tactics when used
effectively, go some way towards displacing the problem, but not eradicating it completely. To effectively tackle this problem the MPS sought the assistance of London’s communities. By doing so, they sought to increase the opportunities to bring offenders to justice with supporting independent evidence and reduce opportunities for gang criminality with a particular focus on violence reduction.

This reasonably new approach to tackling gang violence is having a positive effect, as the MPS modifies internal structures ensuring they are fit for purpose in terms of enforcement and intelligence and develops further partnership working, by exploring alternatives that a few years ago may have been unthinkable - such as independently delivered mediation targeting those suspected of having committed or are about to commit, serious violence.

There are now dedicated gang units in every London Borough that are supporting the work of Trident and other police units in an attempt to develop a joined-up policing response, and provide consistency to partnership working, joining efforts to divert people from the gang lifestyle.

Commander Dean Haydon, who was the head of the Trident Gangs Unit, commenting on the gang violence statistics for 2012/13 in London states,

“We are talking about young people being shot and stabbed...If we can stop just one young person being shot or stabbed then it is worthwhile. That’s why Trident is here.” (Cohen, 2013)
When murders peaked in the capital in 2007 and 2008 and “these were regularly … being described as "gang-related" by the media, police officers and senior officials” (Citizens Report, 2014), the MPS launched an anti-gun and knife campaign, focusing on Serious Youth Violence reduction as a priority. By the end of 2009 the number of teenage murders in London had reduced by over 50% (from 29 in 2008 to 14 in 2009). However, by the end of 2015, the number of teenage murders in London had risen to 17 from 11 in 2014 (MPS, 2016).

It is recognised that the majority of young people who live in the UK are not involved in serious youth violence or gangs (Home Office, 2011). A UK-based international think-tank called the Independent Advisory Research Service (IARS), whose mission is, “to give everyone a chance to forge a safer, fairer and more inclusive society” (Gavrieldes, 2013), states that 99% of young people in London have never been involved in crime and the vast majority are law-abiding citizens making a positive contribution to communities. (Gavrieldes, 2012). But for those who are involved in violent offending, there are a number of interventions programmes that have been introduced in London, intended to tackle violent offending specifically caused by gangs.

These programmes have divergent views, stemming from initiatives driven at a local level where communities muster to present organic solutions led by their members such as “My Gang” in Hackney (Brown and Old, 2011) and “Enough is Enough” (Waltham Forest Council, 2016) in Waltham Forest. In
contrast there are those programmes influenced from seemingly well evaluated solutions that have emanated from the USA, such as Ceasefire, and the impact and influence that these types of interventions have on the Mayor and Home Office when it comes to future programmes, resourcing and funding.

In London, there is Project Oracle, a programme that “aims to reduce youth violence in London by developing the means by which to understand which interventions are effective in addressing youth crime and violence” (Project Oracle, 2016). The Project Oracle hub aims to improve outcomes for young people in the capital. By building upon the capacity of providers and funders to develop and commission evidence-based projects, creating an environment in which evidence can be more widely collected, used and shared. “It aims to work with specific "cohorts" or sub-sets of the sector to embed good practice, and at a national and international level to promote the wider use of evaluation and evidence. Project Oracle is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)” (Project Oracle, 2016).

Stenson and Silverstone caution when adopting, “Off-the-shelf professional strategies borrowed from other time zones” suggesting they “rarely work unless tailored carefully for local contexts” (2013:440).

Accepting that, to date that “No single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to successfully address a complex problem such as gang crime.” (Spergel & Grossman 1997:469), it is now time to
explore one such intervention, Mediation, which relies on multi-agency collaboration, and to examine the outcomes when used to prevent gang violence.

**Determining gang membership for the purposes of mediation**

The Metropolitan Police Intelligence Bureau (MIB) scan intelligent reports submitted from across the 32 MPS London boroughs daily. These reports are created as a result of incoming information from members of the public; information from partner agencies, e.g. the local authority, fire brigade, ambulance service, social services; and information from informants, today referred to as covert human intelligence sources (CHIS). Information is also obtained from scanning known offenders’ social media accounts, such as Facebook and Instagram.

MIB also identify isolated instances of violence or increasing gang tension from incidents occurring over the past 24 hours and look at anniversaries of public disorder; murders; high profile arrests to predict future potential escalations in violent incidents. This complex web of analysis seeks to identify those deemed to pose the most risk and harm to individuals or communities. This intelligence may come to note following a violent incident; a stabbing where paramedics have been called or a person presents themselves at A&E for example. Intelligence checks are conducted on the victims, or if known, the suspects and it is at this point that the MIB piece together supporting intelligence on the individuals; associates; addresses etc. to determine whether or not, in all probability, gang links are present.
Violent incidents or Critical incidents, are discussed at daily risk meetings both in the borough where it occurred to establish a borough response to prevention of further outbreaks of violence and detection of the original incident, and centrally, to provide additional asset support and discuss deployment of alternative tactics, such a mediation if appropriate.

The MPS also has a gang matrix, which prioritises the threat of harm and risk amongst the various gangs in the London area, by using a series of point scoring based on violence and tensions, in order to prioritise preventative and enforcement activity. Whilst not a perfect predictor of violence, it will pick up emerging escalating tensions and advise the boroughs accordingly so that preventative action can be taken.

Rarely do local authorities, probation or prison contribute fully to the picture of gang activity within their area of operation although, some boroughs are realising that they have conflict issues that requires the use of a different tactic. There has been reluctance, particularly amongst certain local authorities to acknowledge that gangs even exist in their areas. This could be political, in so much as Local Authorities, by recognising or acknowledging the issues, are legally committed to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within their boroughs. By not mapping or accounting for the issues, they do not have to be directly dealt with.
However, there are a number of innovative boroughs within London who are covertly monitoring gang activity and have secured the services of Capital Conflict Management (CCM), funding lower level conflicts; ones that fall outside the MPS contract. They also support transitional projects, which aim to remove individuals from the cycle of violence. The MPS still provides the risk management and intelligence support to these boroughs and the Local authorities are able to show how they are reducing anti-social behaviour and harm in communities.

Referring to an earlier claim in this chapter regarding what constitutes a gang member and reinforcing the idea that no two gangs are the same, the next chapter will further expand the theoretical base for this thesis and explore the various interventions available and analyse what is meant by mediation in the context of violence reduction. It will examine the idea posited by a Government Study which evaluated what works, regarding violence reduction interventions, following a nightclub shooting incident where two innocent girls were killed in the West Midlands, (Pepler & Slaby, 1994) recommending interventions to tackle violence should tackle the crime and not target gang membership.
Chapter 3  Intervention and violence reduction

“*We must keep in mind that there are many paths to peace and that only one involves violence*” Jimmy Carter, (Bercovitch, 1996:x)

Introduction

Existing literature, which evaluates the outcomes of interventions used to control gangs and innovative tactics to prevent and reduce violent offending by members of street gangs will be examined in this chapter. There will be an examination of intervention programmes and outcomes typically undertaken to reduce gang violence followed by an analysis of mediation to diffuse conflict, specifically in the context of gangs and violent offending, with a particular focus on activity in London. The issues surrounding a lack of appropriate evaluation of the interventions and a lack of evidence-based outcomes are also identified.

The literature review completed at the start of this research aimed to review existing theories on interventions to reduce violent offending amongst gangs and the outcomes of such interventions. Existing literature and research, which focuses on the lack of evaluation for such interventions has also been studied. This aspect of the research involved a systematic search of the literature using a variety of resources, including online sources, peer-reviewed journal articles, Government documents and internal police reports.
The literature review was conducted in three phases:

1) Identifying key and relevant material from the USA, UK and European academic literature, policy documents and research.
2) Quality assessment of the information to ensure that the material used was fit for purpose.
3) Bringing together my findings to produce an inclusive consistent summary, which is incorporated in this chapter.

**Intervention programmes and outcomes**

“Intervention programs almost never implement controlled research designs” (Klein, 2012:1039).

This observation about intervention programmes not being properly tested is something that appears as a recurring theme among those whom I interviewed, and will be discussed later. Klein suggests that there is little testing or comparative analysis to determine what does and does not work (2012). Braga reports that when it comes to evaluating intervention programmes, “less valid answers [are provided] to policy questions when compared to well-designed quasi-experiments and randomised control trials” (Braga, 2010:173)

Preventing violence committed by street gangs is essential, as recent studies show that gang members, although relatively few in number compared with the population of young people in London, account for the majority of all crime
among youths in boroughs that are known to have gang problems. (See previous chapter, *Ending Youth Violence Report* (Home Office, 2011)).

The various strategies undertaken by the authorities and communities such as pursuing gangs directly; targeting gang problems within an overarching approach for dealing with serious, violent, and habitual juvenile crime; and directing activities towards gang-related violence specifically, will be explored in this chapter.

The results of a literature review on gang intervention programmes used to reduce violent offending indicate that the findings of empirically validated research carried out to date are weak. A very small number of field tests have been completed, and where evaluation has taken place, adverse outcomes are not uncommon, such as; individuals being disproportionately targeted, having been identified as gang members in the absence of any real hard evidence and intervention programmes being implemented that disrupt or detract from interventions where they are most needed. Evaluation research is not always built into gang related initiatives (Stinchcomb, 2002).

A wide range of strategies and interventions are available to practitioners concerned with gang related violence reduction and prevention. These interventions are implemented by individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government in a bid to target the various social and environmental factors that increase the risk of crime, disorder and victimisation (Van Dijk & De Waard, 1991). There is an excess of
approaches available that differ in terms of focus regarding intervention and the types of activities that can actually be delivered, the theory sitting behind how these activities are designed to bring about the desired results and the mechanisms that are adopted (Morgan, Boxall, Lindeman, & Anderson, 2012)

Over the years, these many varied intervention models have been developed to collate the broad range of activity falling within the definition of crime prevention (Lohrir, Farrington, & Justice, 1998) To recognise the importance of a particular approach to crime prevention, it is necessary to appreciate the implications in determining the appropriate institutional and management arrangements necessary to support specific crime prevention interventions (Telep, 2013). An understanding of the different approaches available and their underlying logic and principles is fundamental to the development of effective crime prevention programmes and projects (Weerman et al., 2009).

A challenge faced by those charged with delivering interventions is establishing what is effective; where it will have the greatest impact and on whom. Klein, citing Wilson and Chermak (2011) states,

“a considerable gap exists (demonstrable in scientific terms, one should add). Various project reports between “promising” strategies and demonstrably successful programs and—most notably—government summaries overstate promise in the face of mixed and negative results” (p1037)
Klein (2012) goes onto say that there is

“… a woeful absence of (a) well-implemented programs and (b) adequately evaluated programs. Indeed, one could infer from the Klein and Maxson summaries that almost everything is “promising” because so little has been tested properly.” (p1037)

In the USA, The Boston Ceasefire Programme is often cited as being one of the most successful interventions to target gangs and violent offending. It is cited by many as being a success with outcomes such as a 63-percent monthly decrease in the number of youth homicides in Boston; a 32-percent monthly decrease in the number of citywide shots-fired calls; and a 25-percent monthly decrease in the number of citywide gun assault incidents; (Bragga et al, 2001)

Boston’s Operation Ceasefire targeted youth and adult gang members in a multi-agency coordinated Youth Violence Strike Force. It was founded following detailed analysis of homicide among Boston’s youth. The outcome of this analysis determined that this violence was gang-centred, neighbourhood-based, and concentrated in a small number of repeat-offending, gang-involved youth (Kennedy, Piehl, Braga, 2001:221).

The Ceasefire programme started in individual neighbourhoods with an overt communication campaign (Wakeling, 2003). This campaign began with the co-ordination of community groups who subsequently carried out face-to-face
meetings with gang members. They delivered a consistent message. Gang violence would no longer be tolerated. Gang violence had triggered a zero-tolerance approach and that only an end to gang violence would stop innovative gang-focused suppression actions. Gang members found guilty of committing serious violence would face the full weight of the law. The substantial sentences that convicted gang members received were advertised in high-crime areas. The key elements of the programme were delivered through an integrated approach from grassroots organisations and the faith community.

An important factor of the operation was for each agency involved to keep to their role. There was to be no blurring of areas of responsibility. The partnership working task force of Boston police officers and other agencies repressed youth and adult gang violence including gun use. These suppression tactics included “pulling levers” which included incitements intended to entice individuals into a certain way of behaviour complemented with “pushing levers”, which promised to deliver the full weight of the law that was available in the given circumstances. Costs imposed on offenders in relation to their habitual offending included the targeted use of serving warrants, enforcing probation restrictions, and deploying federal enforcement powers at every opportunity.

In addition, another element of the programme called Operation Night Light, where police and probation officers, working in teams, made nightly visits to addresses of youths on probation to ensure they were complying with their
probation requirements, aided the targeting of tough enforcement sanctions against leaders of the gangs. City “street workers” (outreach workers, gang prevention specialists, and mediation specialists) also worked alongside police and probation officers, helping resolve conflicts and provided those who wanted help with much needed services.

However, following an initial evaluation conducted by Braga et al (2001) it is certain that the initial successes could not be directly attributed to the programme and the intervention methods in isolation, although claimed by many as the panacea for solving the gang violence epidemic, Operation Ceasefire is not proven as a success. Operation Ceasefire was just one element of a collective, far-reaching strategy implemented in Boston. Others included Boston’s Ten-Point Coalition. The evaluation methodology is questionable. Braga describes it as “quasi-experimental” (Braga, 2008:315).

Many researchers have examined the evaluation methodology, due to Ceasefire’s high profile and lauded success and are sceptical that the results attributed solely lie with the intervention (Fagan, 2002; Rosenfeld, Forango & Baumer, 2005). Braga states that the National Academies’ Panel on Improving Information and Data on Firearms (Welford, Pepper & Petrie, 2005) determined, “Ceasefire’s evaluation was compelling in associating the intervention with the subsequent decline in youth homicide” (p316), but suggested that factors affecting the subsequent decline in youth homicide were difficult to attribute solely to the operation, due to complex factors associated with youth homicide trends. The Panel also determined that gangs
involved in the intervention changed their offending behaviour following the intervention (p316).

Corresponding interventions linked to Public Health (Greene, 2008) claim to have a significant impact on violent gangs and offending. In the follow up article from the Boston Globe entitled “With Youth Crime Down in Boston, What Do We Do For an Encore?” (Prothrow-Smith & Spivak, 1997), these declarations of direct impact on youth violence and in particular homicide reduction were being repeated.

With regards to law enforcement interventions and examining what works, Cody Telep, an Assistant Professor of Crime and Criminal Justice at the Arizona State University through the National Institute of Justice Award conducted a systematic review to examine the effectiveness of problem-oriented policing (POP) in order to reduce crime and disorder. Examining more than 5,500 articles and reports, the results of these studies indicate an overwhelmingly positive impact from problem orientated policing.

“(The) police can be most effective in reducing violent crime when they are proactive, use specific (as opposed to general) strategies, focus on small places (or groups operating in small places), and develop tailor-made solutions that make use of a careful analysis of local problems and conditions.” (Telep, 2013)

He advocates,
“Proactive interventions challenge the reactive nature of current law enforcement practices. By using crime analysis to predict where, when and how incidents will occur, the efficacy of crime prevention strategies increases greatly (p1)”.

Uniformly, gang members report significantly higher rates of violent delinquency than do non-members (Loeber & Farrington, 1998:482) and therefore Telep recommends that interventions should be directed at bringing gangs under control. However, There are those who argue that reactive, arrest based approaches which focus on individuals who have already committed crimes are largely unsuccessful and may even increase recidivism (Lum, Telep & Koper, 2011).

By focusing on specific interventions targeting specific types of crime (e.g. a focus on just gun related-homicide), specific types of people (i.e. specific gangs) or specific crime mechanisms / factors contributing to crime (e.g. emphasizing physical environmental factors that could enable crime), Lum et al. suggest that this will be more effective than general blanket strategies such as increasing the numbers of patrol officers or mandating arrests.

Results from the National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) programme in the USA, a school-based prevention program targeting middle-school students through a longitudinal quasi-experimental research design, was conducted from 1995 to 1999. The researchers claim that there were “beneficial programme effects” which
emerged steadily over time which showed that there was, on average, more pro-social transformation in the attitudes of G.R.E.A.T. students than the non-G.R.E.A.T. students four years after programme exposure. (Arksey & Knight, 1999). What the evaluation also demonstrated was that this programme had no impact on youth gang affiliation and criminal behaviour (Klein & Maxson, 2006:136).

The MPS, in recent years has focused attention and resources in hot-spot areas and used crime pattern analysis to predict where serious crime is more likely to occur. These micro areas of wards within London boroughs often consist of only one or two streets. Statistics show most crime occurs in these hot-spot areas. Comparisons are made with these areas and areas where information or intelligence suggests that the identified criminal activity is strongly linked to gang activity. Very often, these areas are the same (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The MPS identified 21 wards within London where the most number of violent offences were occurring and where gang members were believed to be operating. By so doing, in a year on year comparison of concentration of enforcement and prevention tactics in hot-spot areas, the MPS were able to show that robbery fell by 7.5%. (Robbery is a single indicator of the prevalence of gang activity) By further targeting this very small area within a city that has violent crime – Relatively few “hot-spots” produce most calls to Police - 50% of calls in 3% of places. (Sherman et al., 1989) – It is possible to significantly reduce a city’s overall violent crime rate.
Even more powerful is combining the targeting of these small geographic units (streets, corners, clusters of addresses) with tailor-made, multi-agency, focused interventions. An example would be a problem-oriented approach to reducing crime at violent hot spots that includes gang activity. A “pulling levers” approach that emphasises deterring specific high-risk gang members has proven effective in violent crime prevention at these places. Even at the neighbourhood or police beat level, successful interventions were those that still used a more careful allocation of police resources than standard random preventative patrol. An example includes crackdowns in high-crime neighbourhoods, a kind of hot-spots approach to larger geographic areas.

Speaking to The Guardian Newspaper in the aftermath of the 2011 London riots, the Rt. Hon. Ian Duncan Smith said the following:

*We can learn much from Operation Ceasefire, an effective programme in curbing gun violence in Boston, in the US. Mapping gangs and their rivalries, a clear message was delivered: violence will not be tolerated. If you stop we will do everything in our power to help you get out, if you continue we’ll do everything to bring you to justice. Intensive, targeted enforcement was coupled with an intensive offer of support, delivered by community organisations, faith groups and local service providers. One unified message from community and police (The Guardian, 2011).*
The Politician’s citing of Operation Ceasefire as an effective intervention programme in the absence of any real evaluation or scrutiny does not deter Smith from hailing it as a success. It is accepted that Operation Ceasefire was associated with significant declines in young adult homicide in Boston, (Braga, et al, 2001), but, the lack of a randomized controlled design raises significant questions regarding the validity of the findings. Their findings did show the crime decline in Boston was unique when compared to other major U.S. cities and other cities in Massachusetts. Braga and reviewed 11 eligible studies in the main analysis (10 focused on policing), but none were randomized experiments specifically focused on policing (Weisburd, 2012).

It should also be noted that focused deterrence strategies are a subgroup of problem–orientated policing interventions and as a result, exact strategies should vary city by city and should be tailored to deal with the specific problem (Weisburd & Lum, 2014).

Braga and Weisburd conclude,

*In the focused deterrence approach, the emphasis is not only increasing the risk of offending but also decreasing the opportunity structures for violence, deflecting offenders away from crime, increasing the collective efficacy of communities, and increasing the legitimacy of police actions (p22).*
Working with partner agencies that are in a position to identify and analyse in detail local issues, it is more likely that more appropriate tailored interventions are developed. This is an integral part of the effectiveness of pulling levers and other focused deterrence approaches (Weisburd & Lum, 2014).

In Boston today, the Police Department works very closely with the clergy to deliver a unified warning to individuals who are on the brink of committing gang related violent activities. A modification of Operation Ceasefire’s principles has now been adopted. A meeting with Detective Sergeant Thomas Sexton (June 25th 2014) revealed the tactics employed by Operation Homefront. Detective Sergeant Sexton works closely with schools within Boston’s city limits and identifies children (usually under the age of 21) who have a propensity for committing violence. Receiving referrals from school administrators generally, the police together with clergy from within the community make a visit to the home of the offender. In a meeting with Reverend Leason Carmona in Boston, Massachusetts, he provided useful insight into this joined up community approach. Reverend Carmona told me that he sees his role in Operation Homefront, as providing;

“Spiritual Awareness, Confidence, and Support” He continued by saying, it was necessary to display “openness with (these) kids.” To say, “our community cares” (June 25th, 2014)

In 2008, Braga et al conducted analysis on interventions in Lowell, Massachusetts, concentrating on area dynamics. Looking at homicide and
assaults, The Projects Safe Neighbourhood Task Force developed a two-pronged approach to deal with two very different gangs. A traditional pulling leaver approach was adopted towards the Hispanic Gangs. This meant sending a strong message that violence would not be tolerated and that the gang would be targeted for every misdemeanour committed and sanctioned accordingly.

With regards to the Asian gangs prevalent in Lowell, a much different approach was adopted. These gangs had a tendency to be very well organized, secretive and not operating visibly on the streets in the same way the Hispanic gangs tended to do. The Asian gangs had strong ties to gambling operations frequented by older Asians. The importance of these operations to the older generations was used as a pulling lever to use the older Asians to watch over the gang members. The message sent to the Gaming operators was very strong. If the violence continued, the operations would be shut down and this proved a successful deterrent. (Braga, 2008).

Here in the UK, Karen McCluskey, as co-director of Scotland’s Violent Crime reduction unit, claimed in 2011 to have reduced violent offending in Strathclyde by 50%, adopting the US model known as Operation Ceasefire. After the riots in 2011, David Cameron told the House of Commons that it would be ‘a national priority’ to follow McCluskey’s example in reducing gang violence (The Telegraph, 2011).
Research suggests that a lack of social problem-solving skills is a link to youth violence, (Pepler & Slaby, 1994) and youths faced with situations for which they are unprepared may result in a violent or aggressive response. (Baronowski, Perry, & Parcel, 1997). One method suggested to improve a youth’s ability to avoid violent situations is to improve their conflict resolution skills.

In 2008, The Metropolitan Police Service set up a working party to look at conflict resolution tactics that could be used to reduce opportunities for gang violence. Mediation to reduce gang violence was one such tactic explored, and it is that to which this discussion now turns.

Mediation as an intervention to reduce gang violence

Mediation, in the context of gang violence, can best be described as an informal, voluntary, adaptable procedure in which an impartial and independent third party, not involved in the dispute, (a conflict engagement specialist or mediator) assists with dialogue between parties in conflict or dispute. The mediator proactively supports each individual in order to reach the best resolution to the conflict, which is not only acceptable to both parties, but is acceptable to society and is within the law.

The use of mediation in Great Britain as an intervention to defuse deep running arguments between rival gangs or groups is nothing new. For example, in Northern Ireland, after a loyalist arson attack at Drumcree, County Ballymoney on 12 July 1998, three Quinn brothers Richard, aged 11, Mark,
aged 9, Jason, aged 7 all died after a petrol bomb was thrown through a rear window at 4.30am by Loyalists during the stand-off over the Orange Order march. The boys' mother and family friends escaped the resulting fire with minor injuries. The family was of mixed religion, the father being Protestant and the mother a Roman Catholic, who were living in a primarily Protestant housing estate. The then M.P. for the area, Dr. Ian Paisley, visited the site of the attack and described the murders as "diabolical" and "repugnant". (BBC, 1988) Representatives of other groups from all sides of the constitutional issue in Northern Ireland also condemned the killings. Thousands of Catholics and Protestants attended the boys' funeral two days later. The Community came to Mediation Services Northern Ireland, which had been in existence since the mid-1980s and asked for conflict negotiation intervention.

A further example was seen in the West Midlands, where mediation was used following the murders of art students Charlene Ellis, 18, and 17-year-old Letisha Shakespeare, who were shot dead in January 2003 when they were caught in the crossfire between rival gangs in a nightclub in Birmingham. West Midland’s Centre for Conflict Transformation (TCFCT) was formed as a direct consequence of these murders and began to mediate between the two rival gangs. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) acknowledged enforcement was not the answer to the problem of street violence involving young people and sought the help of partner agencies to address this issue.
Mediation in London

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) now known as the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) identified a gap in the provision of a high-risk mediation capability in London. There were incongruent third sector organisations purporting to offer mediation services on an ad-hoc basis, but they very often lacked the necessary transitional services needed to support individuals or families post conflict. These mediation service providers were treated with scepticism by local authorities, the police and those involved in conflict alike. Mediation up until this point had slipped down the priority list, due to all the focus on American programmes such as Ceasefire.

There was a need in London, for a more sophisticated, high level conflict resolution service, independent of the authorities but one that could operate in extremely challenging and high risk situations; a service that could be trusted by all those involved in the process. Capital Conflict Management (CCM) was initially set up and implemented by Peter O’Neill (who was instrumental in setting up the West Midlands Mediation service) with support of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and additional support from London Councils and South East Network Alliance of Councils. The West Midland model had been developed in a less professional way, and did not have the full support of the police and partners. Initially, scrutinising measures which measured its efficacy and the International standards of quality regarding data collection and storage did not exist. CCM is a Community Interest Company and based its business model on the Northern Ireland Service and West Midland’s Centre for Conflict Transformation models, both of which did have
high levels of successes. (Simon, 2012). CCM however, had took almost two years to establish itself; make itself ISO9001 complaint regarding data security and storage; and put a formal project board and committee in place which reported frequently to MOPAC before any work could be undertaken (Tribal, 2010).

The challenges that CCM face are many. Group violence in London is widespread, disparate, and chaotic and covers a large geographical area. London comprises 32 independently run boroughs, which makes for a complex operating environment (Tribal, 2010).

Gangs in London differ from the massive, multi-generational gangs of the US, but they do shy away from the state (like the US) and therefore a service such as mediation offered by a company like CCM can work well. Several authors have written about the tit–for-tat gang violence seen in London. (See House of Commons Affairs Committee, 2007; Millie, 2009; D'Cruze, Walklate & Pegg, 2013). The violence is disproportionate, unpredictable and involves longstanding and endless feuds, which means that mediation is an appropriate intervention and has a good chance of positively impacting on the conflict. The violence seen in the capital can be symbolic or instrumental. The perpetrators lack the skills to resolve the conflicts themselves without violence. Mediation can provide a workable solution, as it is offers a means through which solutions can be reached that can be accepted by all concerned, rather than continue with the cyclical, pointless, symbolic conflicts that often stem from issues over perceived disrespect. Mediation can help
diffuse instrumental violence, such as disputes over drug territory for example, as the participants realise that they are known to the authorities and will be liable to sanctions if they continue their behaviour. The events that lead to the shooting of Mark Duggan exemplify the type of gang conflict seen in the UK. He was on his way to avenge a prior stabbing of a cousin, and the police, following intelligence linked to this planned act of retribution (they having received intelligence in the days before that Duggan was trying to obtain a gun for the act) conducted an operation which ultimately led to his death as he tried to evade capture and threw away his weapon at the time of the stop (IPCC, 2012).

Mediation services take time to launch and become embedded because building capacity in such a fraught and multifarious environment takes great care and diplomacy. As a result of strict governance and control measures required by the Metropolitan Police Authority, CCM did not start delivering services until September 2009 despite being first registered in April 2008.

The young people that come to CCM’s attention are far removed from what would be considered normal for many young people today. Notwithstanding the complexities surrounding the labelling of individuals as gang members, those referred to CCM are believed to be involved in violent gang activity. The MPS adopt the Hallsworth and Young definition when determining who is and who is not a gang member. (Hallsworth and Young, 2008)
A large majority of individuals involved in gangs live in constant fear of getting killed and are as much at risk, as they are a risk to the rest of society. The high level mediation that CCM provides is successful in obtaining initial access to these individuals, who are volatile and suspicious of those working for the authorities. Once trust is established, mediators are able to drill down to the root causes of the conflicts that brought them to CCM’s attention in the first place. Often, these issues are at complete variance with the issues identified by the authorities, and without knowing what these issues are; there is little chance of resolving the conflict and preventing future occurrences of violence.

CCM, through dynamic risk assessments and high level training, is able to deal with some of the most disenfranchised and disadvantaged members of society. These mostly young black men face concerns around unemployment; issues of drugs; and are often in poor health because of their lifestyles and fail to access services provided in mainstream society. They will probably have been excluded from school, been marginalised by society and coexist with like-minded individuals with no hope or aspirations for the future (Tribal, 2010).

Referrals are made to CCM often at a critical juncture in a young person’s life. Predominantly, either following a series of violent activities, upon information of the likelihood of serious violence occurring, or at worst, following a homicide. Due to their training and very often life-experiences, mediators or conflict engagement specialists are often able to access criminal networks,
friends and families in ways that conventional first responders\textsuperscript{6} find difficult or impossible. In so doing, they can provide the initial critical response that is required to; understand the nature of the conflict and implement a framework or the initial steps towards brokering peace or preventing the conflict from spiralling out of control (Tribal, 2010).

They offer advice, support and help, in conjunction with local service providers, such as those involved in the provision of services associated with health, housing and education in order to ensure that extremely volatile situations are pacified and no more lives are lost.

Identifying individuals with the appropriate levels of skills and understanding of the lifestyle and culture of gangs can be problematic. It is important to identify individuals who are able to connect with those involved in gangs on a level that will make them a credible contact. There are many ex-gang members operating independently in communities in London, having turned their lives around and now wanting to ensure others do not make the same mistakes they did, but as Klein states, there are problems associated with using past gang members “as instruments of change” in intervention programmes. (Klein, 2012:1038)

This was a major issue for CCM when they recruited several ex-gang members who had turned their backs on their past lives and wanted to actively deter young people from gang involvement. CCM receive sanitised

---

\textsuperscript{6} First responders is the name usually associated with those who work predominantly in the Police; fire brigade; ambulance or social services departments.
data from various intelligence sources from within the MPS. Suitably vetted individuals only, can access this data. The data very often details family and friends connections and sensitive data about relationship issues and past, present and potential conflicts, that could have devastating consequences should such intelligence fall into the wrong hands. Evidently, many of those who had been gang members in the past had long and violent criminal pasts. Some had ended up in jail or juvenile detention centres. This very fact would mean an instant rejection in the vetting process, which had a knock on effect and meant these individuals, could not be used as conflict engagement specialists in many circumstances.

This was an ever present source of frustration for many involved in the mediation process, as it was felt that these ex-gang members truly understood the issues and had the clout and depth of real life experience needed to interact with referred individuals. Klein warns, “…There are both advantages and dangers in having former gang members serve as “interventionists” (Klein, 2011:1038).

CCM overcame this problem by appointing a single repository of the information that requires disclosure only to suitably vetted individuals i.e. the operations manager of the Company. This individual then further sanitises the data so that the conflict engagement specialist is provided only with the bare details that will enable them to form an introduction. The operations manager then takes all the responsibility around risk management and any subsequent welfare of the conflict engagement specialist for future meets.
The process of mediation generally involves seven main phases. First, there is the ‘Opening Statement’, where introductions are made, ground rules are set, and the process explained. The second step is referred to as ‘Uninterrupted Time’. This is the opportunity for each party to state their position without interruption. The third stage is the “Exchange”, which is the opportunity for the protagonists to exchange viewpoints. The mediator is there to facilitate and “referee” as necessary. Here, positions and interests are established. The fourth phase is called, “Setting the Agenda” where common positions and interests are summarised. This is followed by the fifth phase, which is called, “Building the Agreement”, where accommodations are explored that will suit everyone’s requirements where possible. The sixth phase involves, “Writing the Agreement” where the accommodation and agreements are confirmed and reinforced and consolidate in one written document. Finally, there is the seventh phase, which is, “Closing the Agreement”, where the parties involved to sign the agreement. This agreement is put into place and is monitored and reviewed (See Figure 1 below).
Once a conflict engagement specialist receives a referral, police officers carry out intelligence checks and provide a risk assessment with a grading so that any planned meetings can take account of the likely risk involved and determine where the initial contact will take place. Ordinarily, the conflict engagement specialists prefer to be introduced to the referred individual through a contact who is known to the individual, like a family member, teacher or youth worker. Once this contact is identified, the conflict engagement specialists arrange to meet and plan the first contact. The first meeting is very important and will set the scene for subsequent encounters. The specialists always operate in pairs and prefer to have subsequent meetings alone with the subject, to encourage open dialogue. Through a subsequent series of get-togethers, the conflict engagement specialists gain the trust and respect of the individual referred and delve into the origins of the
dispute from which the original referral emanated. They offer support and create a healthy environment to enable the referred individual the opportunity to rationalise what is happening and provide support around other issues that very often are occurring in the individual’s life. Many of those referred for mediation lead chaotic lifestyles and need much support (Simon, 2012). Where possible, the specialist signpost the individual for additional support (e.g. housing or health). Through established contacts they are able to get individuals into work or education in some instances (Simon, 2012). These additional transformational services provide an important element for the mediation process in its entirety (Tarrant, 2012).

Klein observes that many intervention programmes occur at peak times of violence or offending. He states that there is a lack of activity during periods of calm. After the London Riots of 2011, the UK Government seemed to embark on a series of initiatives and introducing additional legislation in a knee-jerk response to the violence that they attributed to the gangs of London.

Klein argues that gang and violence reduction programs are usually initiated in response to problems that are increasing, or to address issues that have reached a tipping point of intolerance with regards to spiralling violence levels. A quiet period does not generate much intervention activity.

*Peaks are followed by valleys. Programs initiated at peak times will normally play out after peaks are reached. The appearance of success*
may be nothing more than a demonstration of expected normal decrease (Klein, 2012:1038)

However, the mediation project, which began in London in 2009, has seen a constant flow of intervention that is increasing over time, as more boroughs in the capital become better informed of the benefits and as trust is gained by those responsible for making referrals in the community. Camden local authority had already commissioned CCM before the riots began, in an attempt to better understand their specific gang problems.

A further issue identified when a new programme is introduced into the community is; how compatible is it with current intervention programmes? The Police focus on deterrent activity in specific boroughs; Community Interest groups devise community-based responses to violence and gang suppression; Local authorities and social services jockey for position in an attempt to maintain their perceived status as the professionals who know which intervention is best. Politicians and Borough Commanders usually release a press statement to legitimize their position and garner public support, emphasising their new innovative ideas to tackle gang violence.

Braga and Weisburd (2006) note that police agencies typically fail to conduct the in-depth problem-analysis advocated by Goldstein (1990). They state that
“often engage in a form of “shallow problem solving” that involves only peripheral analysis of crime data and a largely law enforcement-oriented response” (Weisburd, 2015).

The MPS launched Operation Connect in 2011, as one response to gang violence in London, a city which houses a variety of diverse street gangs who the MPS say are significant drivers of violent crime – they also indirectly drive other criminality through their heavy involvement in street level drug dealing.

During 2010 / 11, I chaired the MPS - wide tasking meeting (Operation Target) where reports of violent incidents across London were reviewed. This included gang violence. Decisions were made on where and how to target additional enforcement and prevention, which included deploying covert tactics and extra visible patrols in hotspot areas and increased stop and search activity specifically targeting those believed to be carrying weapons. I was able to secure the services of other departments within the MPS if available, to support borough activity centred on violent offending.

A number of MPS departments deal with a wide range of gang related violence and offending in general. The Specialist Crime and Operations Unit 1 (SC&O1) investigate homicides arising from knife injuries, potentially inflicted as a result of gang membership. SC&O2 investigate allegations of sexual offending related to gang membership. SC&O7 (also known as the Flying Squad), investigate armed robbery offences where a significant proportion of these offences are attributed to gang members. In the 12 months, until
September 2011 this unit disrupted 7 of the top 10 gangs in the MPS, recovered 196 firearms and arrested 342 gang members (MPS, 2012).

SC&O8 (also known as Operation Trident), exclusively deal with reactive and proactive investigations related to firearms crime within London. In 2012 this unit dealt with 138 fatal firearm shootings and estimate that over 90% of their work involves street gangs and organised crime (MPS, 2012).

In March 2013, Commander Steve Rodhouse, MPS lead for Gangs and Organised Crime, responded to reports that Trident was changing and undertaking new responsibilities linked to gang related activity. The media reported fears that the new unit would be diluted or lost (The Guardian, 2013). Commander Rodhouse stated that the Trident Command had

“developed some significant experience around these investigations and has also developed good relationships with some of our BME communities most affected by gun crime. This expertise will not be lost and will still be available to investigators. Trident is changing to meet the current need of the MPS and all Londoners. We are in actual fact placing more of our resources into proactivity with the clear aim of preventing gun, gang and knife crime and most importantly protecting young people. These changes build on the successes and significant crime reductions of the past year and the past four years, where we have seen a sustained 20 per cent reduction in gun crime, whilst still investigating gun homicides to the highest standards. I believe that this
A change of approach will significantly improve our ability to drive down levels of gun and knife crime in London” (MPS, 2013).

Currently, thirty-two individual boroughs across London maintain overall responsibility for the initial response to all gang related violence and have a wide remit for intelligence gathering, proactive work and enforcement activity as well as partnership problem solving with external agencies.

The MPS also operates and funds a range of diversion and prevention schemes including educational programmes, mentoring, mediation, re-location programmes and positive activities for young people. Although the coordination of these schemes has improved (historically being ad hoc borough based initiatives) there are still opportunities for rationalisation and greater integration with partners across the Capital.

Operation Connect was established to provide a co-ordinated response to tackle gang violence and gang offending across London. Under this operation, boroughs are supported and given information, so that they can provide a consistent, targeted response towards tackling the already identified, high-harm individuals engaged in gang-related violence. It supports and links all activity to ensure enforcement, prevention and diversionary activity is prioritised and directed against the most appropriate, gang related, person or location.
This Unit is made up of thirty Police Officers and staff who have experience in the development of intelligence, prevention, diversion and enforcement tactics and its aim is to connect what has, up until now, been the disparate activity of police, partners and the voluntary sector. It aims to focus co-ordinated action on already identified high-harm subjects who are linked to gang violence.

The unit incorporates known police intelligence with partner and community information, to ensure their combined resources are targeted against the most appropriate people in a co-ordinated way. It adopts the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) principles bringing together police, probation, fire, ambulance, health, education and social care. This ensures agencies share information and are able to respond to a young person’s needs in the fastest and most efficient way possible. The MPS believes that this method has resulted in a more effective and earlier identification of the most vulnerable children and reduces the amount of different professionals being involved, while maintaining the most appropriate professional capable of delivering the necessary interventions which meet the needs identified in any given case.

Early successes of the operation include, supporting interventions in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and Haringey, where it focused on intelligence gathering and prioritisation of gang offenders, to support partnership and enforcement activity against high-harm individuals in gangs.

By April 2012, Operation Connect was established within 14 London boroughs that formed part of the Home Office funded Communities Against Gangs,
Guns and Knives Programme (CAGGK). These Boroughs are; Southwark, Westminster, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Waltham Forest, Enfield, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Hackney, Croydon, Greenwich, Brent and Ealing.

Its role ensures that each Borough has a continuous set of processes, which expedites joint agency working in order to offer assistance to gang members to exit offending. There is a dedicated case management system of gang members through either a joint agency enforcement approach or a planned diversion route. Each Connect member is assessed against a set of explicit needs criteria in order to identify the most appropriate interventions that are available in the given circumstances. The MPS is working with the Safer London Foundation (SLF) to deliver this aspect of the programme. Case management will be through the ViSOR system, which will allow other agencies various access levels in order to view the records appropriately.

Another of Connect’s intervention responses is an enhanced and focused enforcement capability. A corporate menu of diversions has been compiled and contains a succession of enforcement tactical options. London schools can request the Growing Against Gangs educational programme. This intervention offers support from a central team to give access to expert advice, checking of local compliance and national best practice.

---
7 “ViSOR provides a central store for up-to-date information about offenders that can be accessed and updated by the three Responsible Authority agencies – the police, the Prison Service (both public and the contracted-out estate) and Probation Trusts. ViSOR operates in other UK jurisdictions and it is potentially a vital component for any cross-border transfer discussions. It is available to police forces in Scotland, Jersey and Northern Ireland, the British Transport Police and the Royal Military Police, as well as to all Scottish prisons, mental health bodies and Scottish Criminal Justice Social Work departments”. (Drisko, 2005)
There have been on-going evaluations of Connect’s activities. A performance framework to gauge progress in reducing gang criminality is integral to the programme. When working with the London Borough of Waltham Forest, Connect ran an operation to identify gang members engaged in supplying Class “A” drugs within the borough. Three of these members were linked to on-going homicide investigations and many others were associated with serious offences, which included firearm violations, gang related violence and robberies. The operation sought to detain these individuals involved in drugs supply whilst also focusing on the drug users to address the demand. It also worked with partner agencies to improve the environment where they were active, in an attempt to deter any new drug markets opening. Sixteen gang members being charged and remanded in custody for drug supply offences. 30 users of class “A” drugs were also identified. They had a total of 375 previous convictions between them including violent crime. (Gardener, 2012)

A tailored service to address this particular problem was provided by partner agencies for each of the 30 identified drug users – including; enhanced Drug Intervention Team support, residential rehabilitation, warrant execution and preparation of gang injunctions. Connect successfully removed gang ringleaders and their associates from the heart of the local community. Post operation community intelligence has indicated that one of the most harmful gangs in Waltham Forest has been dismantled as a direct result of Connect’s targeted activity.
Braga and Weisburd (2012) emphasise that:

“In the focused deterrence approach, the emphasis is on not only reducing the risk of offending but also decreasing opportunity structures for violence, deflecting offenders away from crime, increasing the collective efficacy of communities, and increasing the legitimacy of police actions.” Thus, increasing the likelihood of detection can be combined with other program components such as situational crime prevention (to reduce opportunities), social service programs (to deflect offenders away), engaging with the community (to build collective efficacy), and using procedural justice in communications with offenders (to build legitimacy)” (p22).

The successes linked to Operation Connect and subsequently Trident activity linked to gang activity at a borough level raises concerns over efficacy, particularly when looking at the year on year rises of serious youth violence as detailed in Figure 2 below.
Figure 2. MPS Serious Youth Violence 2012-1015 (MPS, 2016).

In chapter 5, I will look at the outcomes of mediation through quantitative analysis. By analysing 123 cases of mediation and comparing the data with a controlled sample of similar individuals who have not been referred, I will examine the offending history 12 months following the referral/commission of the violent offence.

In summary, the literature examined, shows that many intervention programmes that are introduced, are done so in the absence of any control efforts or conceptually derived goals. Very little is known about what works and very little attention is paid to data collection and analysis before, during and after intervention enactment. There is little in the way of co-ordinated activity on a local level, let alone a London-wide level in the capital. Many programmes have long-term goals but those charged with commissioning the projects want fast time results. As a consequence, funding ceases and many programmes come to a halt. We can therefore rarely determine whether or not the intervention actually worked. Many programmes fail to articulate what
issues they are actually addressing. As a result, the implementation is weak and any subsequent evaluation inadequate.

In the next chapter, I will discuss my methodology for the research into the outcomes of mediation as an intervention to reduce serious violence in London. In subsequent chapters, I will demonstrate through quantitative and qualitative research, how mediation in London was introduced to those charged with keeping London safe; how mediation has been implemented, and as a result of this research, present the outcomes that have emerged as a result.
Chapter 4 Methodology

Details of the Research Design

The aim of this thesis is to examine the outcomes of mediation as an intervention with gangs in the context of escalating youth violence in London, with a view to assessing its impact on violence reduction. Cognisant that current practices prioritise specific research methodologies when used to evaluate outcomes of interventions (Christ, 2014), I chose to adopt a mixed methods approach to examine the outcomes of mediation to reduce gang violence in London. By collecting several types of data from different sources I aimed to enhance the studies validity. (Densley, 2011).

The use of mixed methodologies (Chatterji, 2005; Cresswell 2009; Greene, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) is particularly useful for this specific area of research, studying outcomes of interventions. The multiple forms of data examined provide complementing evidence regarding the outcomes of mediation, and testimonies from interviewees with first hand experience of intervention tactics used to reduce gang violence provide significant sustenance to the quantitative data analysis.

Hence, for this research, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation. The quantitative approach where I analysed data regarding gang members held by the MPS in respect of mediation referrals and compared this data of gang members not referred to mediation interventions, and the qualitative approach, whereby I held 17 semi-structured interviews with police officers; police staff; a youth worker; and conflict engagement
specialists (mediators). I had meetings and discussions with 27 community workers; clergy; probation and others involved in gang desistance programmes in the USA as part of the Winston Churchill Fellowship programme.

Some authors argue the design stage is vital. It provides the glue that holds the research project together (Guest, 2012), therefore, it was crucial at the design stage to clearly understand the objectives for the research. My research topic is quite wide-ranging and I am using qualitative research and quantitative analysis to produce answers to more detailed questions (Wilson & McLean, 1994). My research would be of a flexible design (Robson, 2011), which would evolve as my research progressed. My constant focus was on my end product. I was conscious that everything I did from this point on would contribute to my findings and identify implications for practice of the final report.

**Sampling Strategy**

I began by gathering data from work colleagues to establish my theoretical position. I went to the higher analyst and lead analyst who compile the gang risk assessment to determine who I needed to speak to and what data I could reasonably be expected to collect, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews with the right people. I spoke with those who are exposed to gangs routinely, whether in an analytic intelligence gathering role or involved in one-to-one interviews as part of the gang member’s bail conditions, for example. Also, I decided to adopt the snowball sample (Bryman, 1984) to be a part of my sampling strategy, which is a purposeful non-probability sampling
approach. I needed to ensure the people whom I would speak to would have sufficient knowledge and the necessary relevant interaction to enable me to collect the theory descriptions necessary for this study (Geertz, 1973).

From the initial part of the research, I was able to set the parameters of the study whilst being cognisant of the limitations of the investigation with regards to data access and analysis.

**The Qualitative Analysis**

The first set of data originated from 17 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted between March 2012 and December 2013, in London, UK, with a snowball sample of conflict engagement specialist and other actors, such as police officers and youth workers with experience of working with gangs.

Robson (2011) identifies interviews as the most appropriate method when conducting exploratory, grounded theory research prior to any quantitative study. I looked at all the available choices for collecting qualitative data: surveys, focus groups and individual interviews. Having looked at the research design tools on the Eurogang website, I decided I would conduct expert semi-structured interviews. I would interview a cross-section of experts that I work or have worked with; individuals with first-hand experience in dealing with gang members. I did not want it to be too policing-oriented, favouring a wider viewpoint.

Through professional connections, I was able to identify and access key individuals within the Police Service, local authorities, probation service,
Health Service, and the volunteer section of the community.  

The interview records are matched by additional unstructured conversations, which provide a greater source of information than the interviews themselves. Observations of gang behaviour would also have been beneficial to this research. Interviews look for consistency within accounts, whereas observation helps look for consistency between accounts and actions (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Unfortunately, my profession precluded my ability to study actual gang behaviour in the field, and did not allow for routine observations of gang members’ lives and their interaction with family and friends outside of the gang. For this, I relied on the accounts of others who witnessed first-hand these occurrences.

For the semi-structured interviews, my research questions and sample groups lent themselves to qualitative methods, as “interviews can provide the opportunity to explore areas of broad cultural consensus and peoples more personal, private and special understandings”, (Arksey & Knight, 1999:4). By selecting those involved in the mediation process, and giving them a free

---

8 Additional work on another project in America lent support to the hypothesis that gangs in London are very different to their American counterparts, regarding their size, ethnic homogeneity, initiation rituals, and inter-generational links. (Phelps, 2014). A further set of conversations and meetings took place in the United States, following an award of the Winston Churchill Fellowship.8 Having concluded that much of the research into gang initiatives are rooted in the USA (Hallsworth & Young, 2008), I chose to visit the cities of Boston, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles in February 2014 - November 2014, to speak with those involved in gang intervention programmes to reduce gang violence. In total, I had a further 27 meetings and conversations to gain rich data from police officers; clergy; probation; judges; academics and former gang members involved in community projects that aim to support gang members to exit their gang lifestyle. These conversations added to the research by providing information not only on their individual areas of work and expertise, but contributed additional information of what they saw regarding gang behaviour. (Weerman et al., 2009)
reign to add their own insight when answering questions around broad subject areas, I was able to add to the rich data I had already obtained. After transcribing the interviews, a complete thematic analysis followed and is discussed below.

Taking the advice of Sudman and Bradburn (1982) regarding the wording and construction of the questions, I ensured my target audience would be comfortable with the questions being asked and would be able to provide relevant answers. Sudman and Bradburn caution to resist the temptation to formulate questions until you have carefully thought through the research issues.

Using personal knowledge and experience I selected those experts who would have most interaction with those individuals associated with gangs. Robson suggests knowing what you’re looking for, and I did: relevance; experience; knowledge; handpicked experts in their field. I identified key people whom I would interview, my initial intention was to utilise those whom I came into contact with regularly through my day-to-day work due to time constraints and pressures of work. I had built up a rapport with many of these individuals and so initially decided on convenience sampling (Bryman, 2008). Heeding warnings around generalisability, i.e. I would not be able to say that my findings are representative of all experts who deal with gangs, nonetheless I hoped to tap into the insight of this group of experts who work with gangs day-in and day-out in London and so would have a unique perspective. This would also be non-probability purposive sampling of participants, as I had to ensure that I was speaking to experts who dealt with gangs in London. If I had
used a probability random sampling technique, this could have resulted in a participant with little relevance to my project I pre-determined the size of my sample.

I decided that I would conduct professional interviews, identifying members from different agencies who were involved in gang intervention programmes to gain a wider expert perspective. I decided to speak with individuals, whom I knew well, and then adopt another form of convenience sampling, snowball sampling. Having made my initial contact with my small group of experts, I used the subsequent interviews as an opportunity to establish with whom else I should speak (Bryman, 2008). Having decided to go with interviews, I then resolved the appropriate type for this study would be semi-structured. I opted for semi-structured interviews as they provide a framework within which to work without eliminating the possibility of introducing new concepts or ideas, they would identify the main issues as perceived by participants; offer new concepts; and identify new themes, thereby helping me to focus my study.

Semi-structured interviews would allow me to control length and order of proceedings, whilst providing me the opportunity to probe further, and expand on given replies. I would be able to follow up with additional questions as and when the opportunities presented themselves (Robson, 2011).

I rejected focus groups as an alternative. As the people I would be speaking with all work with young people and gangs in a variety of roles, I felt the possibility of self-censorship and inhibition to speak out in a focus group situation would be too great to outweigh the benefit it may have. They also did not know each other and so there could be some suspicion as to sharing
certain information in an open forum. Also, I chose semi-structured interviews to minimise the opportunity for bias. Due to participants working at different units all over London, each of whom would have work commitments, annual leave and training courses, I planned carefully to minimise the logistical difficulties and purchased a digital voice recorder. Having run through the interview a couple of times, I estimated it would last about 30 minutes. I addressed confidentiality issues by having a detailed script, which I would uniformly read out, at the start (Appendix C).

The Interviews

Having been a detective for over 22 years and in that time received much training in interviewing techniques, I still had the PEACE interview model firmly embedded in my mind. I began the interview with a declaration. I explained who I was and why I was carrying out this research. I explained why the individual had been selected. I reminded the interviewee of issues around confidentiality and that I would not share any information that would identify the individual outside the police service. I reminded the individual that if there were any questions that they could not answer, just say and we would move onto the next area. I did not want them to guess the answer. I was after their expert opinion.

I weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of asking open-ended questions. Closed questions are prescriptive in the range of responses from

---

9 The PEACE interviewing model provides a structure that can be used for all investigative interviews. The components are:
P - Planning & Preparation E - Engage & Explain A - Account C - Closure E - Evaluation
which the respondent may choose. In general, closed questions (dichotomous, multiple choice and rating scales) are quick to complete and straightforward to code (e.g. for computer analysis), and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. (Wilson & McLean, 1994) Conversely, however, they do not enable respondents to add any remarks, qualifications and explanations to the categories, and there is a risk that the categories might not be exhaustive and that there might be bias in them (Oppenheim, 1992). Consequently, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, which Mason describes as a “conversation with purpose” (2002:67).

The questions would be answered one by one, without the interviewer jumping around the issues, possibly unduly influencing the answers, and also for convenience for responders (Bryman 2008:218).

The questions followed the following themes:

- What does mediation mean to the interviewee?
- Engagement of those referred for mediation
- What does a successful first meeting look like?
- What methods are employed to facilitate engagement?
- What information do mediators receive prior to the first meeting?
- Are the most appropriate people referred for mediation?
- Availability of additional transformational services
- Does mediation work?
What would enhance the programme?

Do those who engage always want to exit their gang lifestyle?

Are there different levels of mediation?

Mediation limitations

What does success look like?

What outcomes are those who commission the programme looking for?

The first individual I interviewed was a Conflict Engagement Specialist (M1). M1 has set up a community interest not for profit organisation that provides high-level mediation. He works with individuals involved in gang violence, particularly in conflict situations. His aim is to establish the cause of the conflict and through a series of meetings with the individuals, try to get the subjects to agree to desist from future aggression towards either them or others in the gang. M1 provided me with a view of possible catalysts for gang violence, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. He also provided me with the names and contact details of the additional conflict engagement specialists that I went on to interview, including one who was a former gang member in London.

I went on to further interview 8 conflict engagement specialists, 1 youth worker involved in gang desistance programmes; 3 analysts; 4 police officers from the Specialist Crime Directorate at New Scotland Yard. At the time of this research, there were only four police officers and 3 analysts who worked full time on the mediation programme and would have the requisite knowledge to
participate in the research. The Specialist Crime Directorate (3) had only 10 full time staff at the time of my research. This department has since closed due to realignment of services linked to the Annual Spending Review and subsequent budget cuts in the MPS.

Similarly, the small numbers of individuals involved in delivering mediation were chosen as they were engaged most in delivering the intervention and had sufficient involvement to inform the research.

**Data transcript and analysis**

Heeding advice from research conducted (Noaks & Wincup, 2004) regarding the time consuming nature of data transcribing and analysis, I did this immediately after each interview. Following on from the issues I experienced after the first interview, I ensured that each interview was transcribed as soon as it was conducted. I had permission to ask the MPS typists in my borough to assist me, and the typists were able transcribe the interviews within a day so I could reread them with the interview fresh in my mind. I thought it may be difficult to isolate the themes that would emerge from the interviews, but it was easier than I thought. Details of the thematic analysis can be seen below in the results section.

The approach adopted for this aspect of the study, namely inductive qualitative research, involved a sequence of sample selection, data collection, and subsequently, data analysis. This was later reviewed, and expanded upon. This iterative method is core to the “flexible method” of research (Anastas, 2000). As mentioned in Chapter 4, 17 semi-structured interviews
were conducted in London. By using a multiple methods approach to data collection it was my intention to strengthen the overall research, by blending data gleaned from interviews and observations with documents and interviews, or interviews, observations, to enhance the quality of the research through triangulated examination (Denscombe, 2009).

The aim was to provide supporting data that would evidence linkage to the statistical enquiry, and qualify the statistical research findings (Burnard, 1991) whilst simultaneously obtaining a unique insight in part, due to my past role as operations manager in the Specialist Crime Directorate (SC&O3). I was able to identify the key individuals involved in all the relevant processes required.

The 17 people whom I interviewed were involved sufficiently enough with the whole mediation process, to afford a unique insight into the intervention and explain the outcomes in a way that has not been undertaken before. A thematic analysis was then undertaken, drawing recurring issues from the interviews conducted and the common themes that emerged will be examined below.

The qualitative data I obtained must be understood and interpreted in the correct cultural and social context. The mediators interviewed in London, have first hand experience of delivering mediation as a tactic. As described below, they detail how subjects are selected for mediation, referred, contacted and how they subsequently engage or not.
The MPS police officers offer an account of how the subjects are identified and what level of detail is provided to the mediators to undertake the task. The police officers interviewed have the additional task of reassuring the community and their senior management team that mediation works; is a good use of public money and resources, whilst simultaneously delivering enforcement by bringing to justice those who have committed violent offences. They have to balance the requirement to disseminate information and intelligence that arises following a mediator’s visit, with preserving the confidentiality of the mediation process. As is discussed below, this can cause issues of credibility for the mediators as a result.

The police staff analysts are responsible for evaluating the outcomes of mediation. Has it reduced crime? How much has the tactic cost and how is this interpreted in terms of safety and security in the community? The youth worker whom I interviewed is involved with a variety of interventions in various boroughs across London and has commissioned mediation in Waltham Forest Borough.

The conflict engagement specialists provide first-hand accounts of how mediation is delivered; the risks involved; the people whom they deal with; and the outcomes of the tactic. I will argue that this qualitative data obtained from these interviews is worth analysing. The findings of which has much identifiable significance to showing the outcomes of mediation as a tactic to reduce gang violence in London.
I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews; 9 with conflict engagement specialists; 1 with a youth worker; 4 with Police Officers; and 3 with Police staff. All have responsibility for delivering mediation, referring individuals for mediation or monitoring mediation. As this is an intervention in its early stages, the numbers involved in mediation with sufficient knowledge of the process in its entirety meant that this was the maximum number of individuals available to be considered for this study at the time of this stage of the research. Their names have been changed to protect their identity. (See Figure 3 Below)

Figure 3. Table of Individuals interviewed for qualitative analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>Youth Worker</th>
<th>Police Officer</th>
<th>Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 – Abraham</td>
<td>Y1 – Babs</td>
<td>P1 – Mark</td>
<td>PS1 – Lydia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2 – Derrick</td>
<td></td>
<td>P2 – Anne</td>
<td>PS2 – Naomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3 – Antonia</td>
<td></td>
<td>P3 – Daniel</td>
<td>PS3 – Steve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4 – Brenda</td>
<td></td>
<td>P4 – Sebastian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5 – Jason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6 – Barry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7 – Carl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8 – Edward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9 – Virginia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All interviews were conducted on a one to one basis; in a mutually convenient place and tape-recorded. Following the interview, the tapes were transcribed, analysed and common themes identified.

The more people I interviewed, the more I became cognisant that the interviewees discussed similar things in distinctive ways on different occasions, and it became my task to decide which conversation I wanted to use and argue for my decision to include this in the written study. The unstructured conversations I had during meetings held with practitioners in the USA produced additional information, but the thorough discussion of a semi-structured interview provided more detailed accounts which I could probe and qualify through follow up questions and personal knowledge of mediation delivery in London.

With regards to the sufficiency of data collection and analysis, as detailed above, for the quantitative research, I was able to determine in advance the scope of data required to estimate the parameters accurately enough for the purpose of the analysis. There are no comparable methods for estimating the range of qualitative data required in this part of the research. I relied on data saturation to determine when to conclude interviewing others involved in the mediation process. The data collection ceased when interviews no longer disclosed any additional new descriptions (Strauss & Corbin, 1988).

The size of the sample for this qualitative aspect of the research is sufficient for the intended purpose. Mediation as an intervention to reduce gang
violence is at its infancy and as such, the numbers of professionals charged
with delivering mediation is very small. The selection and Interview of nine
mediators out of a pool of about twenty trained specialists in CCM, whilst
small, is not insignificant. The nine selected are responsible for delivering the
majority of the interventions and have the most experience and exposure to
gang members referred in London (Simon, 2013). The sample represents a
significant proportion in terms of hours of delivered mediation in the capital.
These individuals intervene with the most dangerous of offenders who belong
to some of the most violent gangs operating in the most challenging of areas
in the country. No other group of people in the country who are not
considered as first responder agencies ¹⁰, are entrusted with sensitive
sanitised information relating to the most dangerous groups of offenders and
are given unfettered access to such individuals during live police
investigations without being deemed as interfering with the investigation
(Simon, 2013).

It is important to explain why this data set is the most descriptive and practical
to answer the research question posed. I picked the sample of interviewees
based on personal knowledge and interaction during my time as head of
operations in the Specialist Crime Directorate (SC&O3), where I was
responsible for exploring the roll out of mediation as a tactic across London.

The Operations manager at CCM who referred and passed me contact details
of mediators most involved in delivering the programme guided my selection

¹⁰ A first responder agency is usually understood to be the emergency services, local authorities, NHS bodies.
(Secretariat, 2004)
choices for the semi-structured interviews. With regards to the police officers and staff, this was less problematic. I identified the unit responsible for gatekeeping the referrals, that is, identifying future subjects through analysis of intelligence and information, and those responsible for collating the results or outcomes once mediation was underway.

I was then able to compare the data sets to the other alternatives, which were the outcomes of the quantitative data sets for additional information, which in this case, supported the first set of quantitative data results. The lack of any important variations within the data set (for instance, age, ethnicity and gender distributions) made the analysis far simpler to process. I was able to take a comprehensive overview from all 17 interviews conducted to illustrate the common themes, which emerged as a result of analysis.

Quantitative Research

The MPS has collected and stored data for over 4 years in relation to those individuals involved with gangs, referred for mediation following a violent incident or threat of violence. This data is owned by the Specialist Crime Directorate and passed to Gangs’ analysts for processing (Tarrant, 2013).

Using data extracted from the Police National Computer (PNC) I was able to compare the arrest rate of an evaluation cohort of offenders\textsuperscript{11} referred for mediation during the first 2 years of the project, against a comparable control group of the exact same number, drawn from a similar group of offenders.

\textsuperscript{11} The information relating to the evaluation cohort was stored on a standalone database at SC&O3 at New Scotland Yard.
This group were offenders not referred for mediation but were perceived to be gang members and formed part of the MPS Trident Gangs’ Matrix.

The Trident gangs matrix is a scoring system of individuals involved in gangs that predicts their risk of committing violent offences. Information from the police and wider statutory partner intelligence (which is based on violence, criminal offending and gang membership) is used to contribute to the wider intelligence picture that populates the gangs’ matrix. Individuals are added to the matrix from police and partner agencies to ensure that the matrix does not simply represent the single police perspective, but is a wider partnership document (MPS, 2014).

Figure 4 below is an example of how information from the gang matrix is displayed and this is used by the MPS to rank individuals who are involved in gangs, based on threat, risk and harm and identifies the most harmful gang members. It scores individuals who are in a gang. It is not the gangs that are scored. As discussed, police and partners identify the individuals and information is assessed based on their previous violent history (last 3 years); based on the individuals recent Intelligence (violence/weapons last 6 months); based on our partners risk / harm score; based on the intelligence managers judgement. Individuals are also scored and ranked as victims of violence. All 32 boroughs in the MPS have their own matrix and every day these are combined to produce a London-wide matrix.

Each day, the automated system analyses the gang nominal details contained in every borough gang matrix spread sheet and systematically compares all
nominals against the last rolling three years of crime recording data to arrive at a harm score. This automated process provides a consistent approach to scoring across all boroughs and ensures scores are kept up to date (as the scorings are re-done every time the process is initiated).

In addition, the boroughs are provided with a list of any other of the MPS databases such as Merlin (information raised by police and partners in relation to concerns around children) or CrimInt records (MPS intelligence database) associated with their borough nominals that have been identified in the last 24 hours. Contained within their submissions are details of any anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) or any other judicial restrictions based on the Police National Computer (PNC) and data from the Courts.

Also provided is a daily report of 'Potential' gang members, which is a list of people who are not currently on borough matrixes but who have an offending history which indicates they could be involved in gang activity. This is a suggestive list only, boroughs need to review these suggestions and make an informed decision based on all the available information and intelligence to determine if they are indeed gang members. A freedom of information request submitted to the Specialist Crime directorate reveals that as of 18th May 2014, there were 3459 gang nominals listed on the database (MPS, 2015).
There are some critics of the methodology used by the MPS, who argue that the matrix is overly dependent on intelligence, which can be subjective and partial. A recent critique by Patrick Williams (2015) suggests the term ‘gang’ is being appropriated and used by criminal justice agencies to disproportionately criminalise black people and that the negative labeling of their being involved in gangs as gang members, significantly impacts on their subsequent treatment by criminal justice agencies.

Lee Bridges, a Professor at Warwick University suggests that,

“The key question to be raised about gang databases is therefore whether they constitute ‘reliable information or intelligence’ (to borrow a phrase from the stop and search Code of Practice) on which to base policing policies and practices, as well as those of other criminal justice...
Bridges questions the identity of the partner agencies that contribute to the matrix and the selection of information that is subjectively used to populate it, concluding that the methods used contribute to the MPS becoming even more institutionally racist as the data collected targets BME individuals disproportionately. He goes on to say that many of the individuals who appear on the database “have not previously or recently been convicted of any serious criminal offence” (2015).

As quantitative research has been closely associated with positivist and more recently, post-positivist research (Robson, 2011) and positivists believe the researcher and researched participant are independent of each other, there is an acceptance by post-positivists that theories, hypotheses, background knowledge and values of the researcher can impact on what is being researched (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). I adopted a post-positivist view when conducting the quantitative analysis of my study, having recognised the criticism of the old positivism path, mainly concerning my belief, which I share with Blaikie (2007) that I doubt direct experience is a sound basis for scientific knowledge and that facts and values cannot be separated.

This assumption constitutes as the theory that has guided my research and from which the following hypothesis was developed: “Being a gang member increases violent offending behaviour of individuals.” The concepts that need to be measured are gang offending as a whole and individual offending. This will be compared against non-gang members.
Quantitative research methods have the advantage of being less time consuming than qualitative data gathering and the standard procedures are more easily adapted to enable research to be replicated (Neumann, 2000). The disadvantages, however, are many. For example, if there are too many variables, analysis can become overly complex (Denscombe, 2009).

Data collection and analysis

In most social research qualitative data analysis involves three major steps:

- Cleaning and organising the data for analysis (Data Preparation)
- Describing the data (Descriptive Statistics)
- Testing Hypotheses and Models (Inferential Statistics)

Data preparation involves checking the data for accuracy, logging the data; entering the data into a computer; and transforming the data into something meaningful.

Due to ethical considerations, which I will discuss further below, I utilised the services of a research assistant, an analyst from within the gangs unit to extract the data and compare the offending history with the evaluation cohort (those referred for mediation) with a comparable cohort from the gangs’ matrix (those not referred for mediation)

The evaluation cohort (All those referred)

The Mediation intervention programme was initially limited in geographical coverage to a set of wards (Six at the outset, but soon made available to the whole Metropolitan area of London). The criteria for referral meant that the
person was aged 16 to 30 and either involved in serious violence or information had been received that there was a threat of serious violence where they were either the instigator or victim (Tarrant, 2012).

Their records have been drawn together to form the evaluation cohort. I decided on a cut off point for evaluation as October 1st 2011. There were two reasons for this. The first was down to data access. The department responsible for commissioning Capital Conflict Management (CCM) to deliver mediation were concerned about procurement issues for future tender of contract.

The second issue, which I considered as being fundamental to the research, was to allow a full twelve months to elapse following the referral of an individual for mediation, to the checking of the Police National Computer (PNC) for any subsequent offending behaviour. This would provide a more realistic evaluation over a longer period of time and therefore provide a far more accurate examination of the data. Also, arrest data does not always find its way onto the PNC immediately. There were a total of 123 offenders in the evaluation cohort.

The Control Cohort (The Comparative Group)

To be able to formulate a vigorous comparison cohort that in the absence of any intervention like mediation, could be expected to exhibit equivalent offending to the referral group, I set out to identify a group of offenders who, like the evaluation cohort, were perceived as being gang members and would have been referred for mediation had intelligence existed to suggest that they
were involved in serious violence or were threatening immediate violence.

A borough and ward level matching process was used, to ensure that in addition to being perceived as gang members, the offenders selected for the controlled group lived in similar parts of London.

Once the controlled group had been compiled, the quality of the match was individually verified to ensure theoretical rigour and ensuring the composition of the control group created was as comparable to the evaluation group as possible.

The Offender Group Reoffending Scale version 3 (OGRS3) is a predictor of re-offending based on age, gender, and criminal history. Its accuracy has been validated and is widely used in Offender Management (Howard, Francis, Soothill, & Humphreys, 2009). OGRS3 predict that x% of the evaluation cohort and x% of the control cohort would reoffend within twelve months of release from prison. I ensured that the comparative group and the evaluated group had similar predictors for violent reoffending.

I decided to choose an evaluation cohort and a controlled cohort following consultation with practitioners working in the Strategy and Performance Unit in the MPS. They had carried out a thorough evaluation of the Diamond Project (a project launched in thirteen MPS boroughs to provide one on one intervention with offenders who had received a twelve month custodial sentence).

Like the Diamond Project, participation with mediation intervention is voluntary and from previous research it has been shown that those who are willing to
participate generally yield more positive outcomes (Holin, 2008). By selecting a control cohort of a similar number, who have not been offered participation in the mediation scheme, which was operating in their area and comparing them with the evaluation cohort (whether they participated or not) “allows for the motivational impacts on reoffending to be controlled for” (Dawson et al., 2011).

Furthermore, whilst it has been possible to create a control group of those individuals that would have satisfied the referral criteria (i.e. been a part of a gang and involved in serious violence), it would not be possible to establish whether they would have participated, therefore requiring the need to match the groups at the point of referral in order to maintain the integrity of the comparison.

**Mediation Referral Outcomes: Comparing reoffending between the evaluation and control cohorts.**

I took the decision based on experience as a crime manager at Camden to interrogate PNC for offending behaviour for any offence within one year of the date of their referral. Twelve months was deemed sufficient as using too great a time frame could skew findings and results unnecessarily. Research suggests that with time, gang members entering adulthood generally reduce offending behaviour. (e.g. in that time the suspect may have become involved in a long term relationship or have a family of his own and so would have more reason to desist from offending (Simon, 2012)).

By adopting the approach taken will ensure a more realistic and credible
Gang mediation analysis

A total of 170 offenders were initially listed as having engaged in the mediation programme up to November 2011. This information was received from the MPS Specialist Crime Prevention Unit (SC&O3). Of these, four had no previous arrests and had no PNC record and so were excluded from the study. Four were duplicates and were also excluded. Thirty-nine were excluded; as their previous offending did not include violence therefore a match was unable to be found using the matrix. The remaining 123 were used as the experimental group for this research (the evaluation cohort).

A matched control group (the control cohort) was then obtained from the MPS Trident Gangs’ Matrix, which lists all known gang members in the MPS with a violent offending history. The matrix was used, as it is the only available tool that allows the identification of gang members and therefore a suitable cohort for this study. The control group was matched on the basis of age first and then violent offending history. For example, an offender in the evaluation cohort (condition A) who was 18 years old at the time of the mediation referral (November 2011) was matched against a list of matrix offenders (condition B) who were also 18 years old in November 2011.

From this list, a matched offender was chosen who had a violent offending history, which closest resembled that of the evaluation cohort individual. So in this example, where offender A had previous arrests for grievous bodily harm
(GBH), robbery and affray he would be matched with offender B who was on the matrix and was also 18 years old with those antecedents. There were some instances where offenders could not be matched exactly on previous offending and age (this was particularly true as offenders got older).

There are very few offenders on the matrix who are aged over 30, which limits the sampling pool. On these occasions offenders would be matched as closely as possible on age and offending history. For example, where a 30 year old offender from condition A was unable to be matched to another 30 year old in condition B, the age parameter was lessened by no more than two years so they would be matched to a 28 or 29 year old.

Where offending history was unable to be matched exactly, they were matched on the most serious offences, i.e. instead of matching on GBH, robbery and affray, if an offender in their age group could not be found with all three antecedents but a suitable match was found who had only robbery and GBH, then they would be used as an alternative.

**Limitations of the matrix**

The Trident matrix only takes into consideration the most recent three year offending history. In the current study this was limited to 2010. Therefore matching only took into consideration offences since 2010. Offences are only included on the matrix where an offender has been charged or is currently on bail. Using the matrix as a sampling tool therefore excludes offenders who have been arrested for these offences but have been discontinued for various
reasons. Finally, the matrix only considers violent offences. As a result the mediation group could only be matched to the control group on the basis of a similar violent offending history in the past three years. Where offenders referred to mediation only had previous non-violent offending these were excluded from the sample.

**Ethical Issues**

Adopting and maintaining a transparent approach throughout the research project was an over-riding consideration for me. Having identified my topic for study and outlined my research strategy, the next step for me was to obtain approval for the continuation of my research, and in the first instance, this meant obtaining consent from the senior executive at the MPS.

I drafted a terms of reference for the study, outlining exactly what I would be doing, when, and with whom I would be speaking (Appendix C).

In order to access MPS data, I was required to register my research with the Strategic Planning Unit and meet with a member of the team to be interviewed about the study. There were a number of detailed forms that I was required to complete including a discussion regarding data storage and confidentiality. I had to satisfy, not only the ethics policy of the MPS whereby similar standards of compliance for external researchers were applied to me as an employee, but also satisfy the University of Portsmouth’s ethics committee criteria.

Having gained authority to proceed from the MPS, I embarked on my research. I began a diary, as suggested by Robson (2011) detailing
everything I would read, everyone I spoke to, emails out and in and telephone calls. I detailed my thoughts for my reflective account and listed all the problems and issues as they arose and what I had to do in order to move on to the next stage. I structured my research so that I kept organised data collection and files on my personal computer in structured orderly files for retrievable ease (Lee, 2008). My key goal was to maintain transparency throughout my studies (Densley, 2011) and in every case, I informed the interviewee that not only was I a Doctoral student, but also a serving police officer.

I read the code of ethics for Researchers in the field of Criminology on The British Society of Criminology website, (2015) and as stated, I ensured my research complied with their code, that research is undertaken to the highest possible methodological standard and the highest quality in order that maximum possible knowledge and benefits accrue to society.

Whilst I agree and abide by their codes, I was particularly drawn to the point made about the

“obligation to avoid over-generalising on the basis of limited data, and to beware of the dangers of failing to reflect the experience of certain groups, or contributing to the over-researching of certain groups within the population” (2015).

I decided not to interview anyone under 16 years of age, as that would require parental consent, both for ethical and time management reasons.
Anonymity

I gave an undertaking to guarantee that the individuals, from whom I collected data through interviews, remained anonymous throughout, up to and including any potential public dissemination of the results. I did this by replacing names with labels, e.g. Respondent 1. I did not go to the lengths of some gang researchers who have attempted to maintain anonymity at higher levels: e.g. groups (the gangs themselves), localities areas, and even the cities in which research is conducted. I did consider the implications of not identifying the gang and the opportunity for someone to therefore identify an individual whilst working in a small area of London, but decided that the questions I had chosen would not enable individuals to be identified from the results of my data collections.

Informed consent

I obtained written informed consent (Bryman, 2008:694) and included a declaration at the top of the consent form that gave my name and contact number; the reason for conducting the research; a consent slip; and an assurance of confidentiality. I also included wording, which stated that they were free to choose, which questions they answered and could stop at any time. Additionally, I gave the individuals sufficient information about the study at the top of the questionnaire as well as the disclaimer, which I read out prior to the interview. I emphasized the truly voluntary participation aspect of this. The data collected would be tape recorded and subsequently transcribed and held in electronic form on my personal computer.
Territoriality and neutral locations for fieldwork

Territory and location proved to be most problematic in my research. I arranged for the interviews to take place in offices across London reducing the time I would take up of those I would be interviewing. It also allowed those already working with gangs on a daily basis to continue doing so at their own offices. However, not wanting to interfere with their work commitments and not wanting to scare off any participants in the mediation project, I ensured that I booked an appointment with conflict engagement specialists at suitable times when they would not be involved in mediation. Eurogangs research indicates that “there is a small but growing ‘reflective’ academic literature surrounding the problems posed to social researchers conducting fieldwork in risky or ‘dangerous’ contexts” (Treweek & Linogle, 2000). In my study, the applicable issues centred on avoiding unnecessary exposure to dangerous situations, times, and places; issues; and ensuring confidentiality of participants and making clear to the participants the role of the researcher.

With regards to the quantitative analysis, I overcame issues of access to restricted data by utilising the services of an analyst working within the gangs command. She was able to access the data in respect of those referred for mediation and also access the gangs’ matrix to compare offending for those not referred for mediation. This way, the confidentiality of the mediation process was maintained, as was the integrity of the data.
Limitations of the research

The sample size for this aspect of the research was relatively small. However, mediation is a growing industry, and whilst the sampling method was purposive, with candidates deliberately chosen as being the most appropriate people to satisfy the research aims and objectives, the findings should not therefore be read as being representative of all interventionists delivering mediation. Despite these limitations, this study will contribute to a better understanding of the outcomes of mediation when used to reduce gang violence in London. As the literature review demonstrates, this research also represents the first major independent analysis focusing on this issue in the UK to date.

It is also worth noting that if a person is amenable to one intervention they may be more amenable to others. In my experience, those individuals who are referred for mediation are very likely to be receiving all kinds of additional support from a range of social services and this may explain many of the positive findings.

The referral of an individual is made on a need to know basis, and an individual’s involvement in the programme will not be shared with any specialist-policing unit other than the unit from where the referral came. Therefore, if the individual referred is being targeted by the operation Connect enforcement team or being investigated, then this will continue. By accepting the mediation, this does not automatically mean that the individual referred will get access to other interventions, but it might mean that they are more likely to get information on how to secure the most appropriate intervention or support
to meet their needs. Being referred for mediation does not guarantee a place on the safe and secure programme or a job scheme placement, but it may highlight options available that the individuals referred may never have been identified for, in the absence of all the relevant information required for such additional support.

Having examined the methodology for this research, it is now necessary to examine how effective the intervention of mediation is and examine its outcomes.
Chapter 5  Is mediation effective?

Findings and analysis from quantitative data

The total sample of 246 was equally divided between the mediation group and non-mediation group (The evaluation and control cohorts). As both groups were matched on age, analysis of the distribution of age was done on the sample collectively. The mean age was 18.27 years with a minimum age of 14 and a maximum age of 40. Age was not normally distributed and had a positive skew value of 3.37 with the majority of offenders in the sample being under 20 years old as shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Age distributions of the complete sample

Age and delinquency is the subject of much research in the context of gang membership and violent offending. The vast majority of research into gangs in
London show that most gang members are aged between 25 and 29 (Bennett and Holloway 2004:307), with some gangs reporting members as young as 10 (Mares, 2001). In a study conducted by Bennett and Holloway, (2004) which reviewed the NEW-ADAM (New English and Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring) programme, they specifically focussed on gang members and former gang members. Their research showed gang and former gang members had a median age for individuals currently part of a gang of 19 years; for past gang members it was 24 years and for non-gang members it was 25 years. They suggest the difference in age between current and past may be due to “maturation” (p314).

As stated earlier, as gang members get older, there appears to be a correlation between age and greater desistance in offending, generally.

All offenders in the evaluation and comparative cohort were male. The majority as shown in figure 6 were of black ethnic appearance. This coincides with research already conducted, which suggests a typical gang member in the UK is black and male (Mares, 2001; Bullock and Tilley, 2002). However, heeding advice from Aldridge, Medina and Ralphs, (2008) in their enlightening study entitled the “Dangers and problems of doing ‘gang’ research in the UK. Street gangs, migration and ethnicity”, I was cognisant not to read too much into the ethnic make up gangs in London from the set of data I was working with. They suggest, “Media accounts (e.g. Davison, 1997) and police accounts of British Gangs emphasise the ethnic dimension of gangs” (Marshal et al. 2005).
They go on to say that this stereotyping has been heavily criticised by sociologists who suggest this over simplifies the issues of gang membership and "contributes to the stereotyping of ethnic minorities (e.g. Alexander, 2000:35).

Figure 6. Ethnicity of offenders

Key
EA1 = White skinned European
EA2 = Dark Skinned European
EA3 = African-Caribbean appearance
EA4 = Asian Appearance
EA5 = Chinese / Japanese appearance
EA6 = Arab / Egyptian appearance

I decided to break down the crime types into eight crime types. This is more to do with the practicalities of being able to search the relevant databases that
hold such data and includes the crime areas that the Gangs’ Matrix is concerned with recording.

Bennett and Holloway, (2004) research showed gang and former gang members were responsible for 31% of all reported offences. More significantly, they found these gang members were responsible for 89% of all robberies, 49% of all dwelling burglaries; 38% of all non-dwelling burglaries 36% of drug supply offences (p317).

Figure 7 below shows the rates of reoffending generally and for different crime types. 68 individuals from the mediation sample reoffended (a total of 117 offences). Some offended on more than one occasion. The most common reoffending type was for drugs related offences (n=40), followed by acquisitive offending (n=39) and violence (n=38). Comparisons can be drawn between the findings of the NEW ADAM programme and the types of crimes associated with gang members in this study.

*Figure 7. Reoffending levels by crime type for complete sample*
I decided to choose an evaluation cohort and a controlled cohort following consultation with practitioners working in the Strategy and Performance Unit in the MPS. They had carried out a thorough evaluation of the Diamond Project (a project launched in thirteen MPS boroughs to provide one on one intervention with offenders who had received a twelve month custodial sentence)

Like the Diamond Project, participation with mediation intervention is voluntary and from previous research it has been shown that those who are willing to participate generally yield more positive outcomes. (Holin, 2008). By selecting a control cohort of a similar number who have not been offered participation in the mediation scheme which was operating in their area and comparing them with the evaluation cohort (whether they participated or not) “allows for the motivational impacts on reoffending to be controlled” (Dawson et al., 2011).

Furthermore, whilst it has been possible to create a control group of those individuals that would have satisfied the referral criteria (i.e. been a part of a gang and involved in serious violence), it would not be possible to establish whether they would have participated, therefore requiring the need to match the groups at the point of referral in order to maintain the integrity of the comparison. In summary, the evaluation cohort consists of gang members involved in serious violence and referred for mediation. The control group is made up of gang members involved in serious violence but not referred for mediation.
Reoffending Analysis

Chi Square (symbolised by the Greek letter chi, squared $\chi^2$) is a test of the independence of the association amongst nominal or categorical variables. It questions whether the two variables are independent, have no relationship or any association due to coincidence, or are dependent where the relationship exists and would rarely occur if left to chance alone (Hagen, 2006).

It was used here to compare whether offenders were arrested for further offences once they received mediation against those that did not receive mediation. Chi Square was most suitable in this analysis, as it allows the user to examine the relationship between two categorical variables.

In the current analysis both the independent and dependent variables were categorical; whether the offender was referred for mediation (yes or no) and whether they reoffended in a particular crime type. The chi square statistic also allows you to work out an odds ratio, which gives a practical measure of the size of the effect of the independent variable. Their reoffending is based on arrests for offences rather than convictions or charges. Data systems and analysis enabled offending to be divided into seven categories. These are the categories that were used at the time the data was extrapolated to measure the level of offending behaviour and risk of individuals involved in gang criminality. An increase in offending in any of these areas affects the prioritisation of an individual or a gang in the gangs' matrix. The categories are:
• General reoffending – reoffending of any kind
• Violence – Murder, Attempted Murder, GBH, ABH, Affray, Battery, Common Assault, Assault on a constable, Violent Disorder, Threats to Kill
• Serious Violence - Murder, Attempted Murder, GBH
• Minor Violence - ABH, Affray, Battery, Common Assault, Assault on a constable, Violent Disorder, Threats to Kill
• Weapon related offending – Possession of an offensive weapon, Possession of a firearm, Possession of a Bladed Article, Points/Blades
• Acquisitive offending – Burglary, Robbery, Theft offences, Handling Stolen Goods
• Drug related offending – Possession and Possession with Intent to Supply

Beginning with the null hypothesis: Mediation has no significant impact on whether an offender will be recidivist. I present an objective opening statement in an attempt to show the effect mediation actually has on violent reoffending. Additionally, whether the null hypothesis is established or disproved can establish whether or not a relationship exists between the variables being examined. When carrying out the chi square test on the results, the significance level will determine whether or not the hypothesis is rejected or accepted.
Figure 8. Levels of reoffending with and without Mediation

Figure 8 shows the following:

The first column shows those individuals where contact had been made by mediators and subsequently did not go on to reoffend, i.e. Mediation and no offending (M_NO). The outcome is not just above average but also above the upper limit\(^\text{12}\) meaning that there is a causal factor (mediation) causing the high volume of no offending. When you compare M_NO to those who had not been referred for mediation but did not go on to reoffend, i.e. No Mediation, No Offending (NM_NO) in column 3, it can be inferred that the causal factor increases the level of no offending.

\(^{12}\) The upper limit is calculated using standard deviation and the average. The upper limit is one standard deviation from the average; the extreme upper is the average plus 2 standard deviations.
Conversely those who had been referred for mediation and subsequently went on to offend, **Mediation and Offending (M_O)** in column 2, is below the average and the lower limit\(^{13}\) indicating that there is a causal factor resulting in a significantly low number of offenders. When you compare M_O to those who were not referred for mediation and subsequently went on to offend, **No Mediation and Offending (NM_O)** as shown in column 4, it can be inferred that the causal factor decreases the level of reoffending.

The chart also tells us that without mediation (NM_NO and NM_O) offenders are just slightly more likely not to offend, however the difference between offending and not offending is just 76 offenders (8% of the NM total).

The difference between those that offend or not with mediation (M_O and M_NO) is 482 offenders, which represents almost 50% of the total that received mediation.

On further analysis, there are nuanced differences if we analyse by crime type. Generally the largest proportion of the pie charts below, are M_NO with the exception of sexual offences and general offending. However with general offending the absence of mediation is clearly linked to offending. The Sexual offences category of offending is an anomaly showing almost a 50:50 split for no offending with or without mediation. Potentially indicating that for offending in the sexual offences category, there needs to be additional services to decrease recidivism.

---

\(^{13}\) The lower limit is calculated as the average minus one standard deviation, the extreme lower limit is the average minus 2 standard deviations
The chi squared statistical test indicates that we can completely reject the null hypothesis. With this in mind and the above evidence, it is clear that mediation has a significant impact on reducing recidivism. Analysis of the data demonstrates that when mediation is initiated, an offender is 1.8 times less likely to reoffend and 1.38 times more likely not to offend. Looking at each crime type analysed, the following can be established.

**General Reoffending**

76% of the sample reoffended in some way (n=187). Out of the 187 who did re-offend, 119 individuals or 63.6% did not receive mediation. 68 of those who had reoffended had been referred for mediation. This means that 55% of those referred for mediation reoffended again as compared with 96.75% of those not referred for mediation.

The relationship between general reoffending and whether an offender received mediation was highly significant $\chi^2 (1) = 55.57, p < .001$. When an offender was not referred for mediation, the likelihood of them reoffending generally was 1.24 times higher.

Figure 9. General Offending
Violence

45.93% of the total sample committed violent offences post November 2011 (n113), of these 66.4% had not been referred for mediation (n=75). 33.6% who committed violent offences had been referred for mediation (n38).

134 of the sample did not commit violent offences post November 2011, of this 63.4%, mediation had been instigated (n=85). 69% of the evaluation cohort did not commit violent offences following mediation. In comparison 39% of the controlled cohort desisted from violent offending.

There was a significant association between offenders not having been referred for mediation and committing violent offences $\chi^2 (1) = 21.78$, $p < .001$. Where an offender was not referred for mediation the likelihood of them committing violent offences were 3.40 times higher.

Figure 10. Violence
Serious Violence

22% (n54) of the sample committed serious violent offences, 70.4% (n38) of these did not receive mediation. 29.6% (n16) who went on to commit serious violence, mediation had been instigated.

What this shows is that of the 123 individuals where mediation had been instigated, 14% went on to commit serious violence. In comparison, 31% who were not referred for mediation committed serious violence.

There was a significant relationship between offenders not having a mediation referral and committing serious violent offences $\chi^2 (1) = 11.24$, $p < .01$.

The odds of offenders committing serious violent offences were 3.17 times higher when they did not receive mediation.

Figure 11. Serious Violence
Minor Violence

35% (n86) of the sample committed minor violent offences. Of these, 66.3% (n57) had not been referred for mediation. This equates to 46.3% of the total not referred for mediation, who went on to commit a minor violent offences, whilst only 23.58% (n29) of those where mediation had been instigated went on to offend in this category.

65% (n160) did not commit minor violent offences. 58.4% (n94) of the 160 received mediation. What this shows is that 76.4% of those referred for mediation as a whole, did not go on to commit minor violence compared with 53.6% of those who were not referred.

There was a significant association between offenders who had not been referred for mediation and committing minor violent offences $\chi^2 (1) = 13.64$, $p < .001$.

When offenders were not referred for mediation they were 2.74 times more likely to commit minor violent offences.

Figure 12. Minor Violence
**Weapon Related Offences**

The majority of offenders did not commit weapon related offences (n=182). Of these 55.5% received mediation (n=101). 64 offenders were arrested for weapon related offences, 67.2% of them had not received mediation (n=43). 21 individuals were arrested for weapon related offences and had received mediation.

What this means is that 82.1% of the evaluation cohort did not go on to commit weapon related offences compared with 65.9% of the control cohort. Being referred for mediation significantly contributes to an offender not being arrested for weapon related offences $\chi^2 (1) = 8.98$, p < .01.

Where an offender is not referred for mediation the likelihood of their being arrested for weapons related offences increases by 2.41 times.

Figure 13. Weapon Related Violence
Sexual Offending

Counts in two of the cells were less than five indicating that chi square analysis was not suitable. The majority of the sample was not arrested for sexual offences (n=240). However 6 were arrested for sexual offences, these were split equally between the mediation and non-mediation group (n=3).

There are no significant findings between those cohorts referred for mediation and not referred.

Figure 14. Sexual Offences

Acquisitive offending

38.2% (n=94) of the sample were arrested for acquisitive offending, 58.5% of these were not referred for mediation (n=55). 39 of those referred for mediation were arrested for acquisitive offending. 152 were not arrested for acquisitive offending. Of these 87 (57.23%) received mediation.

What this demonstrates is 70.7% of those referred for mediation were not arrested for acquisitive offending, compared with 52.8% of the control cohort.
A significant association was identified between offenders receiving mediation and not being arrested for acquisitive offences, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.19$, $p < .05$.

Based on the odds ratio, the odds of an offender being arrested for acquisitive offences were 0.58 times higher if they were not referred for mediation.

Figure 15. Acquisitive Offending

Drugs

41% (n101) of the sample was arrested for drug related offences. Of these 63.4% were not referred for mediation (n=64). 37 were arrested for drug related offences and had received mediation. 59% (n145) were not arrested for drug related offending, 59.3% (n86) of who had received mediation.
What this shows is that 70% of the sample that had been referred for mediation was not arrested for drug related offences, compared with 45.5% of those not referred for mediation.

There is a significant relationship between offenders being arrested for drug offences and not receiving mediation $\chi^2(1) = 11.64, p < .01$.

The odds of an offender being arrested for drug related offences were 2.44 times higher if they were not referred for mediation.

*Figure 16. Drug related offending*

So, in summary, for every crime type, other than sexual offences, there was a significant relationship between being arrested for reoffending and not having been referred for mediation. This research indicates clearly, that being referred for mediation impacts significantly on an individual’s future offending behaviour.
Engaged with mediation

Also of interest was whether an offender engaging with the mediation process significantly affected their reoffending generally and in any particular crime type. No relationship was found between participation in the programme and reoffending generally or in any crime types:

- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and general reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.01, p = .92$
- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and violent reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.52, p = .22$
- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and Serious violent reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.27, p = .27$
- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and minor violent reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.47, p = .49$
- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and weapon related reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.97, p = .32$
- No significant relationship was found between engagement in mediation and drug related reoffending, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.69, p = .40$

This suggests that offenders do not necessarily need to wholly participate in the full mediation programme in order for it to have a positive effect on their likelihood of reoffending. Rather it appears that it is enough for them to be referred for mediation and initial contact made.
This is also a common theme arising out of 17 semi-structured interviews conducted with conflict engagement specialists, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

**Logistic Regression Analysis**

Also of interest to this study was the combined impact of age and mediation on an offender's likelihood of reoffending. Logistic regression was used to examine this as it allows the prediction of a categorical variable (offending) by categorical and continuous variables. In this case these are mediation and age. Age alone did not significantly affect general reoffending, which does not correlate with empirical research which shows for each year of age there is a two per cent reduction in the odds of general reoffending (Ministry of Justice, 2013:6).

However, in this study, age and mediation interacted to produce a significant effect on general reoffending \( b = .17, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 32.74, p = < .001 \). Older offenders who had been referred for mediation were less likely to reoffend generally.

- A similar effect was found for:
  - Violence \( b = .07, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 18.28, p = < .001 \).
  - Serious Violence \( b = .05, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 7.71, p = < .01 \).
  - Minor Violence \( b = .06, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 11.65, p = < .01 \).
  - Weapon related offending \( b = .04, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 6.48, p = < .05 \).
  - Drug related offending \( b = .05, \text{Wald } \chi^2 (1) = 10.17, p = < .01 \).
Only age alone had an effect on acquisitive reoffending \( b = -.26, \) Wald \( \chi^2 (1) = 9.63, p = < .01. \) As an offender’s age increased, their likelihood of committing acquisitive offences decreased, regardless of mediation referral. See figure 17 below.

Figure 17 – Offending, Age and Age and Mediation comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>95% CI for odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Reoffending</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.05 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.17 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.02 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.07 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.10 (.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.05 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minor Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.02 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.06 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.08 (.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.04 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drugs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.26 (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.01 (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acquisitive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * Mediation</td>
<td>.05 (.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What this research demonstrates, following initial contact from a conflict engagement specialist to instigate the mediation process, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that mediation has positive outcomes. There appears to be significant evidence to suggest the mediation process has a profound influence on violent offending and compliance with the rule of law in general. Similar positive outcomes are noted in other types of mediation situations. Roehl and Cook (1985) report 67% to 87% compliance to agreements reached in neighbourhood justice centres. Mediation has also
been associated with greater compliance than has adjudication in divorce disputes (Pearson & Thoennes, 1984a) and significantly so in small claims cases (McEwen & Maiman, 1981). Interestingly, this does not appear to be the case when mediation was used in criminal cases (Davis, Tichane, & Grayson, 1980), where individuals referred for mediation do not generally comply with non-offending.

However, the data analysed here suggests that mediation is an effective tool in reducing violent offending. Analysis conducted demonstrates that there is a significant 3.4 times less probability of individuals committing a serious violent offence once they have been referred for mediation and contact is established, compared with those individuals who have not been referred for mediation. Individuals are more prone to comply with societal norms and desist from offending generally.

In summary, in determining whether mediation is effective, this is dependent on the identification of individuals who are involved in serious violent offending in the first instance, and who are part of a street gang or group or who appear to offend collectively. Once the mediator has made contact, the quantitative data analysed suggests that reoffending is less likely to follow. This suggests that mediation is an effective tactic. There is a significant correlation between being referred for mediation and desistance from crime. In the next chapter, the factors that contribute to effective mediation will be examined in more detail.
Chapter 6 What are the factors that contribute to effective mediation?

Findings and analysis of the qualitative data.

Qualitative research report(s) must always tell the story of the project, richly convey the views of others, and detail implications. (Denscombe, 2009: 589)

Having established through quantitative analysis in this study, that mediation when used to resolve violent conflict situations involving gangs can be effective, the next course of action is to establish through qualitative analysis, what factors contribute to effective mediation, and thus contributes to the lack of academic research that exists in this area. Chapter 5 was concerned with the statistical outcomes, which demonstrated mediation is effective in reducing violent offending. This chapter will get behind the statistics and discover why mediation can be effective.

Much of the literature that deals with mediation addresses its use in employment disputes (Bingham, 2004), international conflicts (Malanczuk, 2002; Merrils, 2011); divorce proceedings (Boulle and Rycrof, 1998); and community clashes (Pruitt et al, 1993). Further academic understanding of effective mediation use in gang conflicts is required.

Seventeen individuals involved in the mediation process were interviewed and the conversations transcribed. Four overarching common themes emerged.
These were a) Engagement in the process; b) Limitations of mediation; c) additional support that could enhance the mediation process; and d) outcomes of mediation.

In order to interpret the significance of these findings, the following system was adopted. Where nine or more asserted a fact, then this is deemed a majority; where twelve or more assert, it's is a significant majority. Where the number is less than nine, this will be considered a minority and five or less will constitute a significant minority.

Understanding the meaning of “mediation” in the context of gang violence

It was important to establish at the outset from those interviewed what they understood mediation to be. It would have been remiss to assume that each individual understood the process of mediation in the same way, without probing what mediation actually meant to each interviewee.

A significant majority understood mediation to be an individual based intervention that targets those involved in gang violence. Its aim is to help clarify a conflict situation and assists individual(s) in finding common ground even if they continue to agree to disagree. Those involved in the mediating are totally impartial and have no or little knowledge of the alleged dispute.
A police officer involved in the mediation process; who is also a trained mediator stated the following:

“Mediation cuts across various levels. … Mediation for me is a vehicle for people to air their positions and interests and to come to some accommodation and comprise if possible.” (P1, November 2012)

A conflict engagement specialist stated the following:

Mediation is helping to bring about peaceful resolution to all parties involved in the conflict that they may be experiencing. (M1. October 2012)

An analyst from the MPS described mediation as:

“a tactic to lower the temperature or get some understanding between two or more parties.” (PS3)

So there is consistency within their accounts that is steeped in literature. Mediation is interpreted in this context as assistance to two or more interacting parties (Kressel and Pruitt, 1989; Wall, Stark & Standifer, 2001; Moore, 2014) by a third person not involved in the dispute or conflict (Folberg & Taylor, 1984) with the ultimate aim of diffusing a situation involving conflict. (Lafontaine, Ferguson, Wormith, 2005).
A significant majority mentioned that mediation is not always about mediating with two or more people together (Classic mediation), but very often ‘to-ing and fro-ing’ between parties in conflict (Shuttle Mediation). A significant majority mentioned that classic mediation was about getting two or more people together in a room, to agree on a course of action, whilst shuttle mediation was where mediators negotiated on an individual level between two or more parties and revisited each party to establish common ground from which to broker peace. These different aspects of the mediation process are echoed, by scholars such as Umbreit, Coates, and Vos, (2004), as being effective.

Satisfied that there was a consistency in accounts and that mediation was being interpreted in its usual context, the next issue addressed concerned the level of engagement between those referred for mediation and the mediators.

**Themes**

The overarching common themes that emerged as a result of the conversations are:

1. Engagement in the process
2. Limitations of the mediation process
3. What additional support is required to support the mediation process
4. Outcomes of the mediation process
Within each overarching themes, sub themes developed and these will be analysed further, below

1. **Engagement in the process**

Wanting to explore if those individuals referred for mediation always engaged, a significant majority stated that not everyone engaged in the process.

P1 stated:

"Certainly we do find the people who don’t want to engage are just as surprising as those that do. So there’s nothing set in stone about who takes up the offer of mediation."

M1 claimed, “… 75% engage and then engage to certain levels. 25% do not engage”.

The various levels of motivators for engagement and involvement in the process appear to be linked to the level of the conflict and the feelings of desperation of those involved in the dispute (Lim & Carnevale, 1990).

The findings here appear to be at variance to current academic findings with regards to levels of engagement in mediation. Wall and Lynn (1993) posit where the levels of conflict were most serious, there was a lesser chance for a successful outcome to ensue and quoting Phear (1985) they observe that many violent conflict cases were screened out in mediation centres as they felt these types of disputes could not be settled by mediation (p174).
Contrary to those academic findings discussed, a significant majority in this research stated they experienced greater involvement with individuals who had nowhere else to turn; that were desperate or feared for their safety, or the safety of their families. These individuals engaged more in the process than those who felt they had nothing to lose or who were not openly concerned about the level of danger. M3 provided an explanation around at what point do individuals engage, suggesting,

“There’s a sense of desperation, a lot of them when they’re at that point of engaging, and actually in fear of their lives, or indeed in fear of the lives of their family members.”

Then interestingly, M1 intimated that engagement is not always necessary to yield results:

“…according to the research we have done, (those contacted) do not get involved in the perceived violence that they were going to get involved in. There’s something powerful about knocking on someone’s door, saying who you are and what you do. Even if they say, “go away!” it sticks in their head there is something coming out of this.”

M8 added,

“Sometimes the knock on the door by one of us is enough to stop any conflict. The very fact we have made contact and we tell them, “we know what you are up to”, is enough for them to stop.”
M9 added,

“Just your presence alone… calms situations down. Just knocking on that door. They know other people are involved…”

This links back to the evidence provided by the quantitative analysis which showed no significant evidence for level of engagement in the mediation process and desistance from offending. M1 suggests that in his experience, contact made by mediators is enough in some circumstances to stop the intended violence occurring or existing violent incident from reoccurring. There does appear to be a lack of literature on the levels of full engagement in intervention programmes and the effect on subsequent offending.

A meeting with the Head of Unit at SC&O3, Michael Taylor, on 9th February 2015, to discuss mediation outcomes to date, ultimately led to the topic of engagement with the programme. Between January 2014 and October 2014, Michael stated that CCM made contact with 150 individuals with the intention of engaging in the mediation process. 86 engaged, whilst 64 did not. With regards to those who did not engage, on further analysis of the victimisation and offending levels three months before the referral and three months following the referral, the data showed a 68% reduction (n28 pre and n9 post referral) in the numbers whose name appeared on a crime report as a suspect and 92% reduction in their names appearing as a victim (n39 pre and 3 post). The findings of the analysis of individuals who did engage showed a slightly
better outcome, namely 51% reduction (n41 pre and n20 post) as a suspect on a crime report and 89% reduction (n35 pre and n4 post) as a victim.

In summary, a key finding of the research suggests when mediators make contact with individuals involved in gang violence; this contact has a greater impact on individuals being involved in criminal activity, (either as a victim or suspect) than actual engaging in the mediation process itself. There has to be engagement or contact at least, from the mediators. The positive outcomes of mediation are not dependent on any individual completing the mediation programme.

Wanting to find out more about the engagement process, a discussion followed, exploring the lengths to which the mediators go to in order to exhaust all avenues before walking away. A significant number suggested approaching family or friends in order to secure an introduction to the process of mediation. P1 remarked,

“So, although one person doesn’t want to engage, we might find that mediation is applied to them via (their) mother, father or other people in the group. “

M8 refers to family members as “key facilitators”, suggesting the value of having their support in continued engagement.
So by securing pressure to engage from family members or friends, the mediators are sometimes able to make a breakthrough and start some level of dialogue. However, a significant majority acknowledged that the initial response they get on a first encounter differs very much from person to person. Quite often, a first meeting is not a positive one. The family are usually sceptical of the mediators and very often frustrate their attempts to engage.

Worthy of note are Klein’s and Maxson’s observations that familial influences on gang involvement, have far less of an impact on an individual’s offending than peer pressure in belonging to a gang (2006). However, what Klein and Maxson do cite as being a positive influence over youth behaviour is parental supervision and monitoring of the youth’s activities (p148). Aldridge, Shute, Ralphs and Medina (2011: 379) note:

“The parents of gang members we spoke to were fearful of blame, sensitive to stigma, critical of statutory agencies, and often denied or were confused about the problem behaviour of their children”

A recurring theme mentioned by mediators interviewed, identified encountering parents who shared a sense of shame or blame on being told that their child was at risk of being seriously harmed, as a result of the violence within which they were caught up. Another issue identified was parents not accepting that their children belonged to a gang (see Jensen, 2008, Aldridge et al, 2011).
Conversely, a significant number of those involved in delivering mediation, mention being introduced to individuals via family members as a positive impact overall, on individuals engaging with the intervention programme.

Mediators did discuss in some instances, how having family members present during the process can be a barrier to engagement. Not only can parents be suspicious of the process as a result of falsely believing the mediators to be statutory agencies; but juvenile gang members are also reluctant to open up in the presence of their parents, as M9 suggests:

“Sitting in a room with their mum and dad, they might not talk, they may not feel comfortable talking in front of their parents…the mum goes out to make a cup of tea or something, but as soon as the parents walk back in the room they shut up”

M4 suggests individuals who are vulnerable and at the point of despair are more inclined to engage with the process:

“ You will have people engage in mediation because they’re desperate to get out of a situation that they don’t actually see a way out of…when you’re looking at key moments for mediation, it’s when you do catch somebody when they’re most vulnerable and therefore more likely to grab the lifeline we’ve thrown at them.”
This echoes suggestions from scholars such as Lim and Carnevale (1990) who propose interventions are most effective if people are targeted in high-level conflict situations and “substantive pressing techniques” are initiated (Wall and Lynn, 1993: 174). The speed at which mediators are brought in also appears as a critical success factor (Conlon and Fasalo, 1990).

In a gang dispute context, this could be interpreted as mediators attending a hospital bed following a violent incident, when individuals are at their most vulnerable. At these types of scenes, the police have a duty to secure and preserve evidence and so the presence of a mediator could provide that much needed support that is usually absent during such times. The mediators are also able to establish because of their neutrality, what exactly has happened. Rarely do gang members tell police who was involved in the incident of violence that led to their being shot or stabbed, when lying in a hospital bed, let alone talk to the police at all. The mediators are able to attend in the position of concerned members of the community.

Speaking with Lieutenant David Auner of the Los Angeles Sheriff's office in October 2014, he stated that one of the toughest challenges facing any law enforcement personnel following any gang related activity is the effective delivery of meaningful messages to the community. One of the biggest risks facing those charged with keeping communities safe is reprisal attacks. Very often, these types of attacks are as a result of misinformation or misunderstandings. The presence of the mediators who can quickly establish exactly what has gone on, offers a workable solution to community
messaging. This final point was echoed by a significant majority of those interviewed.

Exiting the gang

A sub theme that emerged from this overarching theme of engagement is that not everyone who engages in the mediation programme wishes to exit the gang lifestyle. Being in a gang, is seen to be a tangible opportunity to ‘make it’ and be something where status and wealth can be achieved far easier being a part of a gang, than through the conventional routes of education and employment; routes which many of these young people feel, cannot be legitimately accessed by them (Fagan and Freeman, 1999; Vankatesh, 1997; Hagerdorn, 2007).

Some do not want to exit the gang due to issues of protection. Many gang members, who CCM comes into contact with, already reside in some of the most densely populated gang-affected areas of London. They are continuously threatened by rival gangs and often reside in very deprived areas in London, where the most dangerous elements of society already reside and operate, such as drug dealers; drug users; ex-convicts and those at large for committing crime. (Taylor, 2008; van Gemert, and Decker, 2008)

P1’s views were that

\[ \text{some do and some others enjoy the lifestyle.} \]
M1 had a view that, “people engage in mediation when they’re ready and went on to say, “a lot of people want to resolve the conflict and carry on their lifestyle. But we get a lot of people who have had enough. Quite often they’re older gang members”.

M9 stated,

*Some engage when they need a statement for court, for a case they’re involved in. They think it will help.*

What is clearly evident from the intelligence collected and interviews conducted, is that those who do engage may not exit their lifestyle (46.4% went on to offend again), but the violent offence that they were originally believed to be involved in and were referred for did not take place. Conversely, there are those who fully engage and are relieved when they first encounter CCM staff.

“It is as if they no longer have to hide anymore. The game is up. They often operate under the illusion that no one knows what they are up to. Once we become involved, we tell them, “If we know this about you, imagine what the police and the authorities already know!” This is their wake-up call” (M3)

So, in summary, the levels of engagement vary and appear dependant on the perceived mental state of the individual approached. If they are desperate and have nowhere else to turn, there is evidence to suggest that they are willing to
engage at some level. The more vulnerable they are, the more chance there is of having an interaction. This would suggest that the more serious and immediate a situation involving an actual or real threat of violence, could provide better opportunities to engage the services of the interventionists, as it could yield better results. This could have far reaching implications regarding the use of conflict engagement specialists in the early stages of serious investigations and posits an argument for their presence at Gold Group meetings that often convene in times of extreme emergency or following a critical incident. An individual’s motivation and commitment to engage in the mediation process varies from case to case. In relation to mediation generally, successful outcomes are more likely to occur when both parties are seeking a resolution (Brett and Goldberg, 1983; Skratek 1990). This may also be pertinent when looking at gang membership.

Prior knowledge of the incident

A sub theme emerging from engagement in the mediation process was how little information the mediators had prior to commencing the process. A significant majority suggested that very often, the true reason for the dispute is not known. This means that mediators have to be ready to modify the process

---

14 The purpose of the Gold Group is to provide strategic leadership and direction.

17 Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.
based on the information that becomes apparent during the intervention. Scholars have argued that “mediation is a dynamic and flexible process and adaptability is its prized attribute and its key to its success” (Bercovitch, 1996:4).

A significant majority stated that the mediators were passed “enough information” from what those commissioning the intervention knew themselves. From personal involvement in the initial programme, I was aware that the co-ordinating police officers in SC&O3 are given a certain level of information, which is then sanitised before being passed to the operations manager. This information is then sanitised again before it goes to the mediator.

P1 suggested the mediators are given enough information to assess risk:

“Most assume there’s firearms, most assume that there is danger…therefore some of them at that stage are quite happy just to know, give me the names and I will turn up on the doorstep and cold call, which is a benefit, because they’re not making any decisions on preconceived ideas and on the other side of business, some others will be told a lot more detail because they want to understand the nuts and bolts before they walk in and have an approach”.
M1 echoed, the amount of information given to a mediator is sufficient to get them started:

“You’re given about as much as you need to know. The age of the referral, name, you’re given the nationality sometimes, any criminal offences that they may have had, if they’re violent individuals, access to firearms; of course we need to know those things going in as mediators, ‘cos obviously it’s a very high risk job. A bit of background information; whatever information the referee has is what they give us.”

M7 also commented,

“I am given enough information to make the initial contact”

This suggests that where there are concerns from investigating officers or first responder agencies around disclosure of information and prejudicing a live enquiry, a substantial amount of information is not necessary. If the team is given enough information to make an informed risk assessment and define the necessary approach for an initial meeting, this will suffice. They already assume the issue is a violent conflict; a threat to life issue, or one involving serious violence. “We always go in pairs”, (M6), and in extreme high-risk cases, local police cars are nearby should things go wrong. To date, this has not occurred.
In order to deliver effective mediation, mediators need to “understand the context of the conflict as well as the background, interests, needs and resources of the participants” (Berkowitch, 1996:9). This information, to date, is best gleaned from dialogue between mediator and participants in the programme. A significant majority when interviewed stated that very often, the information about the feud given by those commissioning the intervention was incorrect.

The initial meeting

A sub-theme emerging out of the overarching theme of engagement in the mediation process was a successful first meeting. A significant majority described making contact with the individual by meeting in person as being critical to further engagement. M8 stated that a successful first meeting is when the family are on board and the individual engages fully with no barriers.

P2 saw success as:

“The fact that they’ve established whether the person is willing to engage…if they are at least talking to the mediators and are open to future meetings. It doesn’t always happen straight away…”

P1 argued

…a good meeting would be any meeting where the mediator is able to explain the process, explain who they are, ready to take the next steps and those steps will involve building trust, building an honesty between the mediator and the person that’s actually giving the information or
wanting to help and that moves on to building a proper agreement at the end of the day, when people can trust the confidentiality, trust that the mediators are there for the reason of mediation and nothing else.”

An analyst (A3) saw success as,

“someone who is able to first of all, get their attention, sit down and get them to say what’s going on, even if they don’t seem to want to engage in mending any fences, but someone they feel they can talk to.”

These statements reinforce the idea posited by all mediators when interviewed and a significant majority of the total interviewed - simply making contact is seen as a positive step. It is evident that following an initial meeting, there are various levels of appreciation towards the mediator and different levels of understanding as to why the mediators are there and why they are getting involved in their private matters. Some individuals do not appreciate the process and resent what they see as an intrusion into their lives and activities (Rubin, 1980; Vidimar, 1985). Some engage totally and appear relieved

Conversely a sub theme emanating from efforts around engagement, mediators take when things do not go so well, and whether or not the mediators adopt a consistent approach to referrals. M1 stated,
“If you have someone who is really abusive at the first meeting, I tell the mediators to walk away... if you phone someone to get a meeting and they say they’re not interested, I don’t encourage someone to knock on their door. It’s almost disrespectful... I say, try another tactic. If they’re of school age, particularly, go through a parent, teacher, or someone who knows them. This resonates with them. Reinforces and reassures them that you’re a ‘trier’. If you walk away on the first occasion, they will think, “well they didn’t care anyway”... try, try again”

M3 stated,

Is (sic) about saving lives and reducing risk of further harm, so it’s never an option for me personally to walk away. I’ll try and try again. Clearly you don’t want to harass people, you don’t want to bully people into it... I wouldn’t walk away if I were shut down. I would try again”

P1 stated the following:

“... So they’ll ... see the individual on the first attempt, they can gauge the willingness or the dangerousness of that individual at that stage, so it has to be risk managed... I don’t think, as a general rule, they give up on the individual then and there. It is a matter of, okay, they’re not listening to us, but maybe they’ll listen to their parents, maybe they’ll listen to their friends, maybe, if we go back to them and say, you are in extreme danger, we can help you, do you want to take that help? Then
it gives them another opportunity to say, okay then, you’re persistent; you’re back here…”

A significant majority placed importance on being persistent and not deterred by an initial refusal. All the mediators interviewed stated that they would try several times before closing a referral.

2. Limitations of Mediation

Another overarching theme emanating from the interviews is a significant majority believe mediation has its limitations

M1 however, had a different view, claiming

“There is nowhere where the mediators will not go. There is no one that they will not talk to. There are no limitations.”

M2 stated that there are limitations. She commented,

“…most of the cases that we have, are with young people, gang affiliated young people. And I guess they shut you down at the first hurdle, because the idea of talking to a rival gang member seems ludicrous to them. The issues they’ve been experiencing are so deep rooted and its been going on for so long that they just can’t grasp the idea of mediation as a concept. That’s a big limitation. Trying to make them understand that, yeah, you can talk through your problems. It’s a massive limitation”.
M5 concurs, “There are individuals that are lost to society. I do believe there’s a certain age group as well that you just cannot get through to.”

M5 provides more detail to qualify this comment,

“…it sometimes takes those sixteen / seventeen year olds a long time to then suddenly become clear of what that is, but in a multi-national city that London is, where you’ve got people that have come from war torn countries. It’s hard for them to trust others. The Congolese, Somalian for instance can be quite insular…it’s hard to sort of stereotype people, but there are a group of people where sometimes it’s just too difficult to get through to.”

M4 concluded,

“We ain’t going to be able to solve all conflicts. I wouldn’t say it happens very often, but it does happen some of the time. An individual will cease to engage”.

When asked about individuals referred to mediation and whether the correct people were being put through the programme, there was resounding consistency in all the answers. A significant majority, which included all of the mediators, answered in the affirmative.

In an effort to establish whether or not there was a risk of the wrong people being identified for the process and agencies referring people with a stronger
chance of engaging, all were asked if they believe that the individuals being referred were at the most risk of harm to either society or themselves.

P1 answered:

“We have seen referrals made to the company both from school playground incidents to dealing with serious villains at the top end of it, with threats to life issues and that’s been reported to us and we’ve managed that with the company… the tactic is aimed at preventing the most serious violence around - murder, GBH, wounding, serious public disorder

However, an analyst suggested that some people refer individuals for mediation just to show that their borough has made a referral and have “ticked the box” (A1)

P3 explained that there is strict gate-keeping process in place, managed by SC&O3, which ensures that the most violent people are being referred and prevents these lower level issues from being referred to the company,

"We have other interventions, better suited to less violent and lower threat incidents. The money we have allocated for this programme means that we must target the higher risk offenders and most violent offences" (P4).
A3 explained that a gang that had had a lot of attention was not a high-risk gang. However, due to the number of referrals and attention it was getting due to information reports and intelligence submissions, they were rising up the gangs’ matrix in levels of importance and risk, because there was a lot of gang infighting. A3’s role is to ensure that if the infighting is perceived to be a high-risk threat of immediate violence that the referrals are passed on. But as A3 stated, “I was really worried that we were actually sorting out their internal HR issues as a gang, as an organisation, and maybe making them a better gang at the end of it!”

This is a very pertinent point to make. The ‘importance’ of a gang can be artificially increased by the mere fact that it is getting a lot of police attention. That is why it is important to consider a range of factors when grading a gang in terms of harm and risk and prioritising individuals at most need of immediate attention and intervention. Together with the gangs unit’s analytical capability, SC&O3 gatekeepers do all that they can to ensure the right individuals go forward for help and intervention.

So it appears the conflict engagement specialists are prepared to instigate mediation as an intervention with anyone, anywhere. There are no limitations with regards to which individual(s) they will instigate the intervention with. The risks are apparent and measures are taken to mitigate the risk (operating in pairs; notifying the police of their location and time of meetings etc.). But they recognise that there are a selection of people who will not engage with the process, whether this be due to cultural norms and confidence in the process
3. **Additional support that could enhance the mediation process**

Another major theme that emerged was the support available to mediators. I was keen to explore if the company had sufficient community assistance to enable them to effectively deliver the tactic. What would improve service delivery? What support was out there that could enhance the whole process and boost success? There were a variety of responses.

P1 mentioned a lack of safe neutral venues for “*a classic mediation, a sit down, face-to-face mediation*”. M1 stated that in some boroughs, their services were not correctly aligned and there is a lack of clarity around accessing services and funding to deliver supporting services. M9 suggested that the identification of community leaders that represented community interests was an issue. Very often, the only way to make contact with an
individual is through a teacher or community based volunteer; knowing whom to go to is an important issue.

“We don’t always get the details of points of contacts who can facilitate communication” (M9)

This suggests more needed to be done to compile a directory of trusted individuals who were willing to serve as go-betweens and act in the best interests of the communities. Faith based leaders, such as Imams, rabbis and priests are sometimes appropriate, but other times a youth club leader or football coach would be far more effective. Research shows that effective community support yields better results in a mediation setting (Harrington and Merry, 1988). This is linked to a mediation technique known as compensating. The mediators I spoke to talked about the ‘carrot and stick’ approach. A significant majority of those interviewed discussed the frustration about having so few ‘carrots’ that could lead to a successful outcome. M7 spoke about having to be resourceful and use established contacts to access training, education and job placements. If there was a win or a gain for the individuals in conflict, the better chance the mediators had of engaging the individuals in the process and an increased likelihood in a positive outcome to the dispute (Carnivale, 1996).

**Transformational services that complement mediation**

Transformational services are additional interventions or tools that can complement an initial intervention. When thinking about mediation, this could
be a service like getting individuals back into education, or job training, housing support or access to medical support. I was interested to discover what type of additional support sat alongside mediation and what types of services could be accessed once the mediation had finished.

P1 asserted,

“Certainly in the Metropolitan Police Service we have “Safe and Secure”, which is an opportunity for people to be, let’s say relocated and start again to a degree. That is not without its problems, in that you’re never moving one individual, you’re moving the family, siblings, mother, father who may or may not have jobs, schools, doctors, so it’s not a quick solution.”

When looking at opportunities for gang members to exit their gang lifestyle, a study conducted by Young, Fitzgibbon and Silverstone (2013) found that:

“A change in physical location (family-assisted or not), away from local gangs and criminal opportunities, was seen by family members to be the most effective strategy for gang exit. “ (p6).

I wanted to explore what support would enhance the current service provisions. What would make it all work better?
P1 reinforced the need to have centrally administered but locally delivered services:

“You could have a more universal approach... one size will fit all, across thirty two London boroughs for example, (but) sometimes (this) would not work, because what’s required for a youth perhaps in Merton, is different from one that would be required in Lambeth or even Newham or Islington. It needs to have a localised response at times but also there needs to be a co-ordinated group that says, this is what we need for these individuals, this is where we can source the help for these individuals.”

M1 explained that over the four years CCM had been in operation, they had built up a “portfolio of people” that they could go to for help. The problems cited in London appear to be the lack of uniformity and consistency around services provided in the 32 boroughs. M1 is convinced that most of the time, the services are “out there”, and “they do exist”. But accessing them is a bureaucratic nightmare, requires tenacity and many years of operating within the conflict resolution service, to learn about who can provide what and for how much. Unfortunately, the lack of continuity of staff in the public service often proves a headache for CCM. Just when they think they have a system for dealing with gang members involved in violence, a new Borough Commander or Head of CID is appointed and they have the arduous job of explaining the whole process again, and securing buy in.
M5 discussed a small project called, “Communities against Gangs” where CCM received funding to provide additional mentoring beyond mediation. M5 explained,

“We moved one individual from a football team in the area, as the football team he was in …was getting him into trouble. We put him into a young leadership programme”.

M8 explained,

“A lot of individuals are looking for jobs and they’re looking to exit their environment, i.e. they need to move out of the area. Some of them, you can see, they just want a flat, so you can see straight through that. But a lot of the individuals that we’re dealing, (sic) they’re entrenched so far in the gang stuff and its hard for them to mediate with the faction they’ve got conflict with, so they need to move out of the area, and a lot of time, initially we cannot really give them that. There’s a lot of regular people not involved in crime who need to be moved and so they have to take that into consideration.”

P2 remarked,

“One of the big problems I’ve identified is, it’s quite clear you’ll have mediation that go in and hold people’s hands, they almost become a crutch for the individuals. What then happens is the mediation stops and the mediators want to do some transformational services, but
obviously we (the MPS) cannot pay for that. We can’t afford to, it’s not part of the contract, and they’re suddenly left in limbo. So you might have got them away from some sort of gang culture and aim them towards education or employment, but that support they’ve had is now stopping.

P2 suggests that “mentoring” should follow the mediation process. He reiterates,

“CCM can do mentoring and that way, you’ve got an end-to-end product with hopefully, the individuals not involved in gang crime”

It is apparent that the consensus is that there should be something sitting alongside or following on from mediation, such as, directing individuals into education, training or employment. Mentoring of an individual appears to be a solution offered by mediators and police officers alike and CCM appear to be equipped to carry out this also. (M5, P2).

Other mediation options available

P1 stated that:

"I am aware that there are other companies that say are working or operating at a lower level. The difficulty comes with that is deciding which is the most appropriate approach; pure mediation or mentoring or a mixture of both. From our perspective or from my perspective, CCM operate at the high risk end of it, with all of the necessary
safeguards around risk, around trade craft, around information handling; whether that is consistent with let’s say lesser levels, is another issue. I am aware that there are some other levels below that, that there are individual companies that will operate to a degree”.

M1 approached the issue in a different way, stating,

“There are two types: the classic and the shuttle. With the shuttle, you don’t get the two parties together. This is generally about those parties wanting the other to know they are not interested in getting involved in the beef. The classic is face-to-face. Quite often, those want out of the gang completely. Conflict resolution is not about us finding the solution; it’s about them finding their solution”.

Y1 explained,

“Mediation is used to broker some of the biggest conflicts in the world. Why on earth would we choose to ignore using it as an intervention to prevent gang violence? If it is good enough for the UN to prevent world wars, it should be good enough for London’s gang conflicts.”

What is clear is that there are companies in London who purport to offer mediation as an intervention in gang disputes. However, the MPS, nor any other department in the Criminal Justice Service, co-operate with these associations in the same way as they do with CCM. This is because CCM has the required security and risk management measures in place that meet the
minimum operating standards required by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime and data storage and collection complies with data protection legislation.

4. Outcomes of mediation

There was a resounding consistency between responses. All the conflict engagement specialists; the police officers and the youth workers believe mediation works and prevents violence occurring. They believe it to be a very effective gang control intervention delivered through individual targeting. P1 stated,

“…a high proportion of those that we actually see and engage with, do not commit the offences or do not commit the acts that we’re afraid that they’re going to go on and commit, within three months of us closing down mediation…yes it works”.

M1 stated,

“I would say in the four years that I have been doing this, it does work. We have a 100% success rate. Every individual who has engaged, they have not participated in the level of violence that they were expected to engage in after we have closed the case, so yes it does work. It stops quite a lot of violence”
M1 continued,

“We have proof that we have prevented several murders. We have proof that we have stopped a lot of violence. We have moved people back into education and employment. Yes it does work”.

This is a bold statement to make; a 100 percent success rate and the prevention of several murders. Maxson and Klein (2006) discussing individual reductions in crime offending as opposed to gang unit offending state, “If anyone has empirically demonstrated the capacity to achieve this goal (e.g. violence reduction), we are unaware of it” (p235).

Recognising the sensitivity that exists around disclosing actual cases, I asked M1 if he was able to elaborate further on evidence of successful individual level violent offending reduction. M1 discussed a mediation involving a young gang member from South London who became involved with a notorious drug dealer. The individual had lost drugs belonging to the dealer and things got out of hand:

“The dealer called the kid to a meeting and the dealer turned up with a gun. The kid was street wise and turned up with a knife. When the gun didn’t go off, the kid stabbed the dealer. The dealer went to hospital, and as you know when someone turns up in hospital with knife wounds the police are notified. The dealer thought that this kid had grassed on him and so put a contract out on the kid’s life. We know in these situations these kids either end up seriously injured or dead. The kid
thought that this was going to happen to him. The kid called his probation officer, who called the police and they contacted us. We went and spoke to them both and negotiated a settlement for the kid to repay the money. The dealer was happy, the kid was happy. We got the kid moved. He’s alive and walking around. We prevented a murder”.

This type of outcome is something that the authorities, such as the Police or probation could never have legally secured without huge criticism or outcry. Green interprets the effects of a strong police presence in intervention programmes:

“Individual officers’ behaviour and role identification are shaped by departmental organisations rather than the problem to be solved. This results in the police agency itself being a powerful obstacle to effectively introducing problem solving for youth or other problems.”

(Greene, 2003: 13)

In the case study evidenced by M1, without a significant level of intervention, a cyclical level of retaliation violence could have ensued. Lieutenant David Auner of the Los Angeles Sheriff’s office cited gang-related ‘tit-for-tat’ reprisals as being of significant concern to public safety. He explained that when a gang related murder occurs, very often, retaliation occurs shortly afterwards.

There will be rumours and street information. Often, the information is incorrect. Retaliation assaults tend to target the wrong gang. This type of gang related shoot-outs are cyclical and tensions increase. The challenge facing the
authorities is to determine “how can a process be developed that facilitates communication with a third party without endangering any real suspects who would face retaliation should their identity be discovered?” Lieutenant Auner explained a system has been developed that aims to facilitate accurate community briefings. The briefings are open and state “This was a dispute between family or business or domestic violence incident.” The difficulty arises when deciding what messages to release to the community when a gang related incident does occur to ensure the feud is not fuelled and escalates further. The cyclical event of violence is difficult to close.

The evidence presented here by the conflict engagement specialists and police officers in London, suggest, not only can gang-related murders be prevented through the use of mediation, but also there is the added benefit of preventing reprisals occurring as a result of the initial violent event.

Those interviewed talked more about the success of mediation rather than the outcomes. Success means different things for different people involved in this process. The Police Officers identify success when they receive a referral that they can pass on to CCM. They are actively seeking outcomes also. P1 states,

“Success truly for me, when we receive referrals and pass them on… From a police perspective it’s about crime reduction. That joins in with everybody else’s outcomes of trying to get this person back into mainstream education, or back into mainstream employment or
basically to function in society without being the next victim or the next assailant.”

A3 stresses,

“I think mediation doesn’t actually prevent these clients having a life of crime. I think it can have an impact on their violent life of crime and I think that would be success if we can actually show that there are less murders, killings and serious physical harm to our population. I think that would be success”.

A2 believes,

‘Success is an absence of their names appearing on the suspects field for violent crimes and if their name does not appear within three months of the mediation close, we can say, that was successful for that mediation. We can’t say it’s successful for all time, ongoing, but we can say, that particular issue has been successfully mediated.”

M1 says that defining success “is the hardest question (to answer)”. He elaborated,

“One level, if we knock on the door and get five minutes with an individual where no one has got this before and this is success. Just five minutes of their time. On another level, you get a face-to-face
meeting with two people in a room. They shake hands, leave and decide that they’re not going to be friends, but they’re not going to try and kill each other anymore. And they’re going to call off all their friends. And then there is success, where someone comes to you and says, ‘I want out of this lifestyle’. Success depends on the individual. “

M1 explained that success means different things for all involved. He stated,

“Success for the operations manager (at CCM) is if all the mediators come home safe at night. As far as local authorities are concerned, they are, “how do we make sure our community is safe? If we don’t have the level of violence in our community, we will be seen to be better. The police, the goal is to stop these individuals harming each other. That’s the end goal. Stop the violence. Whatever policing you want to do around that, they can keep doing that”.

M1 continued,

“2 days ago, they talk about how violence is reduced and how murder has gone down and then they highlight the most violent area in England is Lewisham. Now I can tell you we don’t receive any referrals from Lewisham. If you look at Boroughs who refer to us a lot, Southwark, Lambeth, Waltham Forest, they have less violence, less activity even though they have more gangs than Lewisham.”

---

16 According to Channel 4 News report, Lewisham has a homicide rate that is twice the national average, at 2.5 people per 100,000. http://www.channel4.com/news/crime-violent-murder-lewisham-broadland-stephen-lawrence
M3 explains,

“The area that I live in myself is quite heavily affected by gangs. I have young family members, I’ve got a nephew, I’ve got a little brother who was been involved in gang lifestyles with quite dire consequences at times. I’ve got an eighteen year old daughter, I’ve seen a number of her friends lose their lives over the years, she’s eighteen years old, so I’ve seen a number of her friends lose their lives, that’s obviously quite horrific, I’m sure you can imagine. Personally, I am just sick and tired of seeing young people being killed.”

She continued

“Success looks like to me when you have managed to contact all the individuals on a referral, engaged successfully with them, by this I mean over a period of time and get some sort of dialogue going between the two because that’s the main thing, whether it’s in a classic medication setting or whether it’s shuttle mediation, that’s success to me, when I know that we’re now talking. Even agreeing to disagree is success for me. Some sort of resolve, any sort of resolve, even if it’s to agree to disagree. That’s success.”

Academic research, referring to intervention programmes suggests,
“a tendency… to judge success more particularly by violence reduction than by general delinquency reduction, offender rehabilitation, or integration into the community“ (Klein, Gordon, Maxson, 1986: 683)

So, what is apparent is, whilst everyone concerned with the intervention wants the violence to stop; the outcomes and successes are more personal. For the police, it is about getting a referral in from a borough and it passing the criteria so that it can be shared; For the analysts, it’s about the individuals referred for mediation not appearing in their research and intelligence associated with further violent offending; for the mediators, it is about establishing contact, and the varying levels of interaction and engagement they can have with their clients. A successful outcome can be just establishing contact right through to two individuals sitting down and shaking hands agreeing to stop the violence-a classic intervention.

And for the local authorities and communities, who they represent, a successful outcome I would suggest is a proven intervention which demonstrates it can reduce violent reoffending so that their borough does not feature in the media as being listed as one of the most violent places to live in England.

P1 concludes when examining the outcomes of mediation post-delivery very often, those commissioning the service or involved in the commissioning want information as to what is going on. This can be problematic for the mediators. They operate on the premise that the meetings will be confidential. They have
a caveat that if the individuals disclose any offence that seeks to put or places any individual in danger or risk of harm, they will notify the authorities. That being said, the purpose or by-product of mediation is not to amass intelligence to feed back to the authorities. P1 states,

“Unfortunately, it would be nice to understand, be able to pass that information around, but the problem is credibility. If there is a further conflict and that information has been passed around then it totally negates the trust that’s been built up, to be honest and open about the issues that are actually in the background. …Sometimes it’s the level of those outcomes that we have difficulty presenting.”

And this difficulty in quantifying and qualifying the outcomes of mediation has been addressed by this study. The overwhelming evidence from this aspect of the research is that mediation has some real positive outcomes. This will be addressed in the next chapter.
Chapter 7  Discussion

So what has this research presented as the outcomes of mediation as an intervention to reduce gang violence in London and what has been its impact on violence reduction? How do gang members in London engage in mediation and what is a successful outcome? This chapter will discuss the findings of the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis in the context of these overarching research questions.

Establishment of mediation and engagement.

Qualitative analysis identified a common understanding amongst practitioners as to the meaning of mediation and the concept of conflict management. The type of mediation and its effectiveness is predicated very much on the nature of the dispute, the length of the conflict and the individuals involved. Essential to its success however is that the mediators themselves understand exactly what the conflict is about. Without getting to the crux of the issue, a long-term resolution is unlikely. The research demonstrated that there are not only challenges of embedding the concept of mediation within the conflict situation, i.e. involving those in dispute, but challenges associated with those in authority and public service responsible for referring individuals for intervention.

Once an individual is identified and satisfies all the relevant criteria for referral, the challenge then begins for the mediator to make contact and establish a rapport. The qualitative research identified that individuals do not always
engage in the process. There are many reasons for this such as; general mistrust of the mediators, not understanding their role and mistaking them for another authority interference, or pressure from family and friends not to engage.

The mediators discussed their experiences where individuals engaged totally with the process and occurrences where they refused to engage completely. However, there was an unequivocal claim that once contact had been made, the original dispute which was either a serious violent confrontation or threat of such, either did not occur or did not resume. The quantitative analysis provides some weight for this claim as all types of reoffending involving any type of violence was significantly lower amongst the evaluation cohort compared with the control sample.

Individuals’ engagement with the mediation process could be attributed to cultural efficacy theory (Ohbuchi, 1998) which suggests that in some societies the process of mediation is well embedded and those in conflict are familiar with the concept of turning to third parties for assistance when in dispute (Wall, Stark and Standifer, 2001).

This concept is shared by the LEAP foundation, a charitable organisation that since 1987, has worked within schools to embed the concept of mediation by training young people to mediate in issues of conflict at school by “giving young people and the professionals that work with them the skills to understand the causes and consequences of conflict” (LEAP, 2015). One
outreach worker interviewed stated that LEAP’s aim was to work with young people and develop skills in conflict resolution, conflict management so that the very concept of mediation would become ingrained into their life and would be the norm when resolving conflict situations (Babs, 2013).

Violence desistance and opportunities to exit

Looking first at the quantitative analysis, the statistics demonstrate a clear difference between all types of violent offending for those referred for mediation and those who are not. In every offending type analysed (except sexual offending, where the total reoccurrences measured 6 in total), it clearly demonstrated that those referred for mediation offend less and therefore conform to societal norms of a law-abiding routine.

With regards to data analysis, all 246 individuals were on the Trident gang register and as such would warrant additional police attention as a result of being so identified. As it can be argued the most dangerous and most violent offenders should be referred for mediation as a matter of policy, the evaluation cohort should be the most violent individuals’ involved in gang violence operating in the MPS area. The fact that this research demonstrates they commit less crime is a significant finding.

With regards to gang violence, the challenge facing law enforcement personnel is to prevent the cycle of violence continuing, which often occurs unless interventions can “calm the nerves of the community, and get them to
understand what has happened” (Auner, 2014). Desistance from gangs can occur either at the point criminal offending or whilst being a gang member.

Research suggests that with time, gang members entering adulthood generally reduce offending behaviour, e.g. in that time the suspect may have become involved in a long term relationship or have a family of his own and so would have more reason to desist from offending (Simon, 2012). This is supported by social control theory, which asserts that individuals engage in criminal behaviour when social bonds are weak or disrupted (Hirschi, 2002). Hirschi claims that in early childhood many young people form a societal bond, which stops many of them from becoming involved with law breaking while others who are unable to form this bond become delinquent. Hirschi’s theory concluded that an individual’s participation in delinquency was inversely related to the strength of an individual’s relationship to society. As gang members leave adolescence and acquire long-term partners or become fathers, their social bonds strengthen (Sampson and Laub, 1990:625) as they experience an important turning point in their life (Elder 1985:17) and this turning point can lead to a reduction in criminal offending or a total desistance from crime. (Laub and Sampson, 1993). Horney, Osgard and Marshall found that men committed more crime when using drugs and less crime when they were with their wife (1995:655).

**Benefits and limitations**

In this study, attention has been focussed on mediation provided by Capital Conflict Management (CCM). This is because there are many organisations
purporting to offer mediation services within the metropolitan area of London. However, unskilled individuals lacking the support necessary to deliver such a crucial intervention provide many of these services on an ad-hoc basis. Very often, this type of intervention can be more damaging to an already unstable situation. If individuals delivering mediation are unable to identify the reason for the dispute, the motivation of the warring parties to reach a resolution and be able to detach their own interests for reaching a solution, then their efforts can lead to failure. The very fact that different groups are delivering mediation can also have a detrimental effect on violent offending that can result in interference rather than assistance. Many of these organisations are unable to impose a settlement as they lack access to the transformational services needed to sustain any on-going peace.

“Failures basically result from the application of an inappropriate strategy and the application of a strategy by an inappropriate person or group” (Bercovitch, 1996:231).

CCM has been able to satisfy regulator’s requirements and operate to industry standards with regards to accredited training and security systems. Their conflict engagement specialists are vetted and approved and there is on-going training and checks and balances to ensure the most appropriate people are delivering mediation to those at most risk and those who pose a significant risk to London.
The interviews conducted with the specialists identified their motivations for using the tactic. There are those from the community who are personally affected by gang violence. (Antonia). There are those who were part of that offending network, imprisoned and now wishing to ensure other members of the community do not go down the same path (Barry) and there are those that have seen the outcomes of senseless violence as former police officers and now in retirement want to use their knowledge and connections made over a thirty year career to limit the numbers of individuals killed senselessly on the streets of the capital. (Abraham and Jason).

**Successful outcomes**

The quantitative analysis demonstrated that there are positive outcomes associated with mediation. It can be seen to positively impact on offending generally, and significantly impact on violent offending. There could be many reasons for this. As mentioned, those referred for mediation are at the most risk of committing violence or being involved in violence. As a result, these individuals may be subject to many other interventions sitting outside mediation. One of the challenges for those charged with keeping our communities safe is establishing what has been done already, who are the persons involved with an individual or family and how coordinated are the agencies in delivering their intervention. Without this knowledge, it will be difficult to establish what works in isolation, and as such it is difficult to claim that mediation in isolation is the panacea to violence reduction. What we can conclude is those referred to mediation are less likely to be involved in subsequent violent offending overall.
In all crime types analysed, except sexual offending, the gap between offending for those referred for mediation and those not referred was substantial. What is also interesting is, as all the evaluated cohort did not engage with the mediation process fully, we are unable to lay claim that those who are willing participants generally yield more favourable results. What we do know, from interviews with those responsible for delivering mediation, is that individuals are more likely to engage when they are desperate; at their wits end; or have nowhere else to turn. It may be at this point that they have an epiphany and conform to societal norms.

In this study, all those referred for mediation desisted from the original violence for which they were referred in the first place (Simon, 2012). Many of the individuals who engage want something out of the process, such as a job, training or somewhere to live. What the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analysis were able to demonstrate in this research is that mediation has many positive outputs. It offers individuals the opportunity to get involved in a holistic approach to violence reduction whereby impartial people will give individuals the time and space to discuss specific conflicts and issues that are a cause for concern, not only on an individual level, but community level. Those who commission and deliver mediation recognise many intractable social conflicts are impervious to the more traditional methods of enforcement, disruption, intervention and prevention. This research shows there are many benefits associated with the approach but much more work is needed in order to tease out the critical success factors that mediation purports to deliver as
per the claims of those delivering it. This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.
Chapter 8 Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, I explained why I undertook this area of research: to examine the outcomes of mediation when used as an intervention following an occurrence or threat of gang violence. Following the UK riots of 2011, there was significant media coverage, which identified large numbers of London gang members being responsible for much of the looting and violence in the capital. Headline grabbing titles filled Internet articles and newspapers with statements such as “London riots: Rival gangs join forces” (BBC, 2012) and Tottenham riots: police let gangs run riot and loot (The Telegraph, 2011).

The Government response was to establish a Riots, Communities and Victims Panel (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013). In their report, entitled, Government Response to the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel’s final report, the issue of gangs received much attention. The report stated that at least one in five of those convicted following the riots were “known to be part of a street gang” (p13).

The cross-Government “Ending Gang and Youth Violence” report was published in November 2011, three months following the riots, and outlined a set of principles and good practices that should complement enforcement activity. This activity, it said, should be available to provide support for individuals who wanted to exit their gang lifestyle and transform their lives.
Teams of practitioners with experience of working with gangs were established to work in gang affected areas, with a focus on improving opportunities for partnership working and respond to gang violence in the community. Legislation was introduced to specifically deal with under-18 year olds in the form of gang injunctions and the Youth Justice Board established gang panels across the country.

The NHS were told to improve the way in which it “contributes to reducing violence, in particular by improving the way the NHS shares information about violent results” (p13). So, in summary, the Government response not only focused on interventions associated with individuals, groups or gangs, and the community, but also took measures to address gaps in suppression activity and preventative opportunities aimed specifically at gangs and violence reduction.

Having been involved in prevention and enforcement activity to reduce gang violence in one role or another for 24 years, I hope that the findings of this research could ultimately be used to inform those involved in commissioning, directing and funding successful workable interventions, by demonstrating how mediation may have a significant effect and impact on violent gang offending in London.

Additionally, I hoped that the findings could be used to provide the various Local Authorities with a more informed view on where to direct or divert resources and funding for such initiatives that set out to tackle serious youth
violence, and consequently, prevent further murders of young people by young people in the capital.

The aim of this thesis was to explore the outcomes of mediation when used as an intervention with gangs in the context of escalating youth violence in London, with a view to assessing the impact it has on violence reduction and to address the gap that exists in academic literature around outcomes of violence reduction and violence prevention when mediation is instigated.

This research explored a single intervention method, namely mediation, and presented the yet unknown indicative outcomes and benefits when used to reduce violent gang offending in London through detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis. This research looked at the work of a single company, Capital Conflict Management (CCM) who operate in London, and are the only Home Office approved enterprise that has legitimacy to function within the whole of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) area, where intelligence sharing protocols have been established, and their services are encouraged in every London borough. The data examined cover a 12-month period, which allowed for sufficient analysis of offending behaviour from the point of referral, using two samples made up of 246 individuals in total - an evaluation cohort and a controlled cohort. This analysis was conducted to see if mediation had any effect on violent offending and general offending through statistical analysis. 17 individuals involved in delivering the tactic were then spoken with, using semi-structured interviews as an approach to data gathering. The sample was chosen due to their expertise and contribution to delivering, commissioning or analysing the outputs of mediation. This approach was
adopted to ensure that those who are most involved in the process could give
an insightful view into the intervention and enable the research to discover
whether or not the service provided is effective mediation.

The purpose of this thesis was achieved by asking two research questions;
how do members of gangs in London engage with mediation tactics when
instigated, and what are the outcomes of successful mediation? These
questions were answered by addressing five key objectives dealing with
specific aspects of the research. These distinct objectives were not examined
in isolation, as the outcome of each objective impacted on the subsequent
phases of the research strategy. The first objective determined how
mediation was established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing
violence. The second objective arising from the analysis of Met Police data
illustrated the varying depths of the gang member engagement with this
process. The third objective determined the benefits and limitations of
mediation and transformational services, illustrating how immediate and
practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop
or reactive behaviours become apparent during the mediation programme.

The fourth objective drawing on the outcomes of 1 to 3 above and congruent
with the aims of a professional doctorate, identify the implications for practice.

With regards to the findings of the quantitative analysis conducted, I was able
to demonstrate that individuals referred for mediation subsequently commit
less violent crime. I was able to show through qualitative analysis that
mediation is an individual level intervention used in the context of violent
offending at group or gang level. By targeting individuals, mediation does not seek to disrupt or frustrate gang membership or even gang activity. Mediation seeks to reduce violent offending. If, as a by-product of mediation an individual chooses to exit their gang lifestyle and engage with subsequent transformational services, then this is an unintended consequence but a welcome one. Mediation can be seen as a concept in the context of a prevention strategy for future reoffending. Once the process is instigated, violent reoffending reduces.

The present government are still proceeding on an enforcement route regarding gangs (see the changes to Gang ASBOS, the Serious Crime Bill) and the UK is still influenced by activities and interventions used in the USA, (see Operation Shield). Given the direction of policing it is likely that the police will make referrals to mediators in the future but for a holistic approach to violence reduction, I would argue referrals need to come from the Health service, prisons, probation and community safety partners within local councils.

Suppression strategies tend to utilise the full force of the law in order to deter and regulate gang issues in the community. The police practice directed patrols and planned arrests. They habitually increase focussed intelligence gathering through surveillance of known gang areas and employ other techniques, which suppress gang activity. The formation of specialised gang task forces and use of experienced gang prosecuting lawyers increase the likelihood of gang members being arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. The
introduction of anti-gang legislation is an additional tool used to improve the ability of the police and courts to arrest and prosecute gang members. (Miethe & McCorkle, 2002).

Street gangs exist for a variety of reasons; be this to do with social ostracism or perceived social exclusion, poverty, poor housing, or lack of opportunities. By tackling individuals, this tactic will have little effect on the fabric of society and their existing environment, which creates opportunities for individuals to seek out gang membership or involvement. Suppression tactics often involve targeting individual major gang members, with the aim of frustrating their activity. The goal is to know what they are up to, identify their associates and crack down hard on any offending behaviour. The overarching objective is to reduce crime. Increased police activity is the result in certain gang-inhabited areas, and sometimes, this intensification of police presence can result in resentment and a backlash from the community. The qualitative research demonstrates that mediation does not aim to suppress the activity of gang members or gangs. Rather, the aim of Mediation, through dialogue, is to provide an opportunity for those involved in conflict to desist from violent offending.

By providing an individual who is prepared to listen to the suspect or victim of violent offending, the mediators aim to create space, to give individuals the opportunity to seek clarity and rationalise the reason for the conflict or dispute. This is not something that those charged with keeping communities safe could envisage doing. These agencies would be forced to act. Forced to suppress
the activities or planned activities of the gangs. A short term gain maybe, but the “beef” remains far longer than the presence of police, probation and social workers.

My research contributes to knowledge in the area of Desistance Theory. Desistance from crime is the long-term abstinence of criminal offending among those where offending has become a way of life. Understanding how and why people desist (and why it takes some longer than others) is crucial when determining what tactics to use or which strategies to follow to reduce violent offending. It is a complete mystery to many practitioners and researchers why some desist earlier than others.

In the same way as there appears to be a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a gang, similarly, there is little agreement on the definition and measurement of desistance from crime. Some see desistance as the permanent cessation of offending, monitoring several years, whilst others take a less constrained description of desistance, accepting sporadic re-offending may occur. For these reasons, in the research literature there has been as much debate about how to measure desistance as there has been about how to use the insights gleaned from studying it.

In my research, desistance was measured 12 months following the referral for mediation and 12 months following the offence coming to light for the non-referred cohort. The vast majority of people who offend eventually stop over time. There are many reasons for this, which include maturation, death,
imprisonment or disease to name a few. In their report entitled, *Understanding Desistance from Crime*, Laub and Sampson note “termination is the point when criminal activity stops and desistance is the causal process” (2001:1)

Understanding the factors that lead to desistance is important in shaping interventions that reduce reoffending amongst those already involved in crime. “Insights from the experiences of desisting individuals can help to refine criminal justice efforts to help people stop offending” (McNeill, 2006: 45-6)

Several theoretical frameworks can be used to explain the process of desistance such as, maturation and ageing, developmental, life events; and rational choice. The life course perspective provides a very compelling framework and it can be used to identify institutional sources of desistance and the dynamic social pressures inherent in stopping crime. Mediation offers a life course changing window and an opportunity to make a rational choice. Individuals are given space and time re orientation of the cost and benefits of their continuing offending behaviour and in this case violent offending. They are given some perspective. This was not something I considered when I began my research, but it became evident once my findings emerged from the analysis. The dynamics of desistance have only recently become the subject of intensive study.

Cusson and Pinsonneault (1986) provided some support for this idea with a small, qualitative study of former robbers, identifying the following as factors influencing desistance: shock (such as being wounded in a bank raid);
growing tired of doing time in prison; becoming aware of the possibility of longer prison terms; and a reassessment of what is important to the individual.

Similar findings have been reported by other researchers like Leibrich (1993: 56-7), Shover (1983: 213) and Cromwell et al (1991: 83), which all identified the importance of a ‘decision’ to give up crime. Whilst such decisions may not be sufficient on their own for desistance, they are likely to be necessary.

Another dimension of desistance concerns the relationship between the individual and society. Sampson and Laub (1993) developed the notion of a bond between an individual and society. The bond is made up of the extent to which an individual has emotional attachments to societal goals, is committed to achieving them through legitimate means, believes these goals to be worthy, and is able to involve themselves in the attainment of such goals. Sampson and Laub theorise that engagement in offending is more likely when this bond is weakened or broken. In addition to this, they argue that at various points during the life-course, various formal and informal social institutions help to cement the bond between the individual and society.

For example, for adolescents, school, the family and peer groups influence the nature of the bond between young people and their wider communities, whilst employment, marriage, and parenthood operate in a similar way for adults. Thus, avoidance of crime is often the result of relationships formed for reasons other than the control of crime.
The outcomes of mediation compliment the recent evidence which has emerged about the importance of self-identity in the desistance process. Maruna (2001: 8) aimed to ‘identify the common psychosocial structure underlying [ex-offender’s] self-stories’. He identified that ‘to desist from crime, ex-offenders need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves’ (2001: 7). This draws on his finding that individuals who were able to desist from crime had high levels of self-efficacy, meaning that they saw themselves in control of their futures and had a clear sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. They also found a way to ‘make sense’ out of their past lives and even find some redeeming value in lives that had often been spent in and out of prisons and jails. The desisting ex-prisoners he interviewed often said they wanted to put these experiences ‘to good use’ by helping others (usually young people in similar circumstances to their own) avoid the mistakes they made.

Mediation supports Giordano et al (2002:999-1002) where the ‘theory of cognitive transformation’ is argued. They maintain that the desistance process involves:

A ‘general cognitive openness to change’
Exposure and reaction to ‘hooks for change’ or turning points
The envisioning of an appealing and conventional ‘replacement self’
A transformation in the way the actor views deviant behavior

Mediation seeks to identify the issue - the beef. Why is there a dispute? Through open dialogue, they aim to steer the individual back
on track and to highlight what the outcomes of violent offending will mean for the individual and for the family. Also, what the impact will be on all those involved.

Another significant finding is that full-blown engagement in the mediation process is not necessary. The sustained knock on the door is as important as completing the mediation process and this could have significant implications for those commissioning interventions, moving forwards, Particularly when considering the cost of delivering mediation in a wider context, embedded as business as usual and also developing additional opportunities where mediation could be seen to be effective, such as an intervention when threats tare made against a person’s life, which currently is extremely police resource intensive.

The use of mediators could facilitate the changing role of police as posited by the current MPS Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, who has repeated that in the current climate, the police will have to “make informed choices about our priorities” (The Guardian, 2014). His vision is for officers to deliver more crime fighting capability rather than community policing and mediation and the service delivered by these trained professionals could be seen as a move in the right direction. The results of this research certainly suggest that this is something that should be explored further.
Those who deliver mediation services believe its limitations are dependent on individuals interacting with the mediators. However, from the quantitative analysis, it can be seen that once contact is established, even with non-engagement, positive outcomes ensue, with those referred 3.17 times less likely to commit serious violent offences than those not referred.

100% of the specialists concur that the reported violent incident predicted did not occur or the threat to violence against another did not happen once the specialists made contact. So, conceptually, mediation appears to do what it sets out to do, which is to stop violent incidents occurring or prevent violent incidents recurring and spiralling out of control once instigated.

The reason for this appears to be individuals involved in gang violence very often believe no one knows what they are doing. They believe they are operating undetected. Once someone makes contact and informs them they are being watched or monitored, then very often, the dispute stops.

Further research is necessary in this area of work which was outside the scope for this research, but a comparable study of violence following the delivery of a Reverse Osman warning and subsequent violent offending following contact from mediators would be an interesting area of research that could save police forces many millions of pounds if comparable results can be drawn, by securing the services of mediators to deal with threat to life issues as opposed to round the clock surveillance of suspected victims and perpetrators of threats to life.
Having determined how mediation was established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing violence in London, it is evident from the relatively low levels of take up, particularly amongst local authorities, that there is much scepticism surrounding its use. Commissioning the services of the current main service provider is becoming more problematic - particularly in the current climate of economic austerity. The MPS and local authorities have had stringent financial reductions imposed, and the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) require increased accountability from the MPS before approving the commissioning of services delivered at a London-wide level.

The political will is currently inclined to favour a more localised approach to intervention. Individual boroughs are still inclined to adopt a “we know best” attitude when deciding what interventions and programmes they wish to deliver in their communities. Unfortunately, the risks associated with this approach include commissioning poorly thought out programmes, without acknowledging empirically measured outputs simply because they can, and are, indeed, encouraged to do so by current Government policy. The government has, to date, espoused locally delivered solutions that are community driven as a preferred model to the one size fits all regional / national approach.

The MPS had historically funded the commissioning of CCM’s mediation skills, having acknowledged and understood the impact its services have on serious violent offending. With the Coalition Government imposed reductions
in the policing budget for 2014, the capacity of the MPS to secure CCM’s services in the years ahead look uncertain. The MPS have to approach MOPAC in order to get approval for any significant spending, of which mediation is. In the absence of any compelling evidence that mediation fits into existing gang exiting initiatives, securing mediation services in its current form could be quite challenging.

Interviews with the mediators suggested that not all those who engage in their programme want to exit their lifestyle, but quantitative analysis demonstrates that those who do engage in the programme are 3.4 times less likely to commit a violent offence. So it will be interesting to see how those holding the purse strings view the outputs of mediation as a stand-alone programme.

Work conducted by the Specialist Crime Directorate (SC&O3) at New Scotland Yard has shown that 25% of individuals referred for mediation ask for additional help. This is not to say that all of these individuals want to exit their lifestyle immediately, but, according to the head of unit, Michael Taylor, one in four referred want additional support around housing; education or job training for example. This would suggest that mediation has a greater role to play.

The signposting of individuals towards other transformational services that they may otherwise have missed, or never found out about appears to be an important by-product of the mediation process. There is much evidence to

17 Meeting with Michael Taylor 9th February 2015 at New Scotland Yard.
suggest that older gang members who gain employment and/or education opportunities are far more likely to exit their lifestyle than those who do not. (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996). Klein and Maxson (2006:257) suggest, “careful targeting” of older leavers of gangs can be helpful.

CCM has been awarded separate funding to deal with this aspect of assistance following the conclusion of the mediation process. To date, there has been no analysis or evaluation of this aspect of the intervention and would constitute a whole new piece of research to determine the outcomes.

The second objective arising from the analysis of Met Police data was to illustrate the varying depths of the gang member engagement with the mediation process. From analysis conducted to date, engagement varies from none to total engagement. A recent study by SC&O3, which looked at closed cases of mediation referrals between January 1 2014 and 31 October 2014, identified that out of 205 individuals referred, 135 or 68% engaged with the mediators. 18 86 met and engaged with the mediation process at varying levels; 64 met and would not engage in the process and 55 received no contact, meaning the individuals referred could not be traced or failed to engage. Unfortunately, no records existed regarding levels of engagement for the sample analysed. The 123 members of the sample who had been referred for mediation were selected because contact had been established with the mediators. Records at that time did not measure detailed levels of engagement. However, evidence from this sample demonstrated that making

---

18 MOPAC Conflict Management Briefing Note 2015.
contact with an individual compared to those individuals who engaged with the process, made no difference to the outcome. The findings suggest that initial contact had a positive effect on subsequent serious violent offending.

The third objective was to determine the benefits and limitations of mediation and transformational services. This illustrates how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented if inappropriate responses develop or reactive behaviours become apparent during the mediation programme. It is apparent that mediation yields many positive outcomes. A reduction in harm and risk for the individuals referred and the individuals involved in the dispute is the main positive outcome that has arisen from this study. It is highlighted that not all individuals referred will engage in the process. However, even if they do not, the mere fact that they have been referred appears to have a positive impact on the potential for future or repeat violent offending.

Mediation deals with individual offending behaviour, even though this is in the context of the individual acting as part of a gang. The limitations to mediation then become apparent. The emphasis on targeting individuals to the detriment of focusing on the gang as a group, will not deliver the far-reaching transformation on gang structures and group offending that is required. That being said, by identifying and targeting multiple individuals who are at the most risk to society and themselves, I assert that those individuals who engage with mediation and wish to exit their lifestyle, ultimately impact significantly on the make up of gangs, especially if those targeted are leaders and prominent gang members.
Sustainability

Mediation is not the solution to all of London’s social problems like poverty, marginalisation, discrimination; lack of access to social services, education, employment or training. However, with the proper resourcing and funding, a by-product of mediation can be the direction of the most vulnerable and most at risk to exit their gang lifestyle and becoming a productive member of the community.

Mediation interventionists were quite candid in their interviews, stating that mediation is not about individuals wanting to exit their gang lifestyle. Indeed many have no intention of so doing. Mediation is clearly about reducing repeat violence or reducing escalating violence caused by gangs and gang members. This is one of mediation’s strengths. It clearly articulates its goals, outcomes and limitations. On their website, CCM describe what they deliver. Mediation is about “dealing with complex and varied situations”, where mediators focus on assisting communication, improving understandings, support creative thinking and exploring accommodations that is, more implicit and than explicit understanding and finally, facilitate the process of the agreement (CCM, 2015).

The benefits that have been realised to date include that those referred for the intervention are over 19 times less likely to engage in general offending. Tribal concluded that a murder had been prevented and instances of serious
violence avoided or significantly reduced, saving the treasury huge financial sums.

The fourth objective drawing on the outcomes of 1 to 3 above and congruent with the aims of a professional doctorate was to identify the implications for practice. From the research conducted and interviews completed those involved in the mediation process are able to:

- Identify that there is a conflict
- Identify what the conflict is about
- Identify who is involved
- Identify what has been done already and more importantly, what has not.
- Establish contact with those involved
- Instigate dialogue
- Continue Dialogue
- Reach an understanding whereby the subject of mediation agrees not to pursue a course of action that involves violence or harm against anyone or anything.
- Refer the individual for post mediation support, such as housing, employment, training or access to health care.
- Report the outcome to those involved in commissioning the intervention for future learning and development.

Mediation has a positive effect on violent offending. Effective mediation delivered by impartial highly trained specialists, who are able to communicate with those in dispute in a language they understand, also has a profound
affect on violence desistance and the provision of support and transformational services for those involved in gangs. The outcomes of this research are evidence based. I explained early on in my research how answers to the questions posed (how do members of gangs in London engage with mediation tactics when instigated, and what are the outcomes of successful mediation?) in current literature is vague, generally due to the fact that the use of mediation in the UK to counter gang violence is relatively new and only recently has sufficient data become available which enables an informed comparative study possible.

In Chapter 2, it was firmly established the context of the research by exploring what is a gang and study the world of gang membership, with a particular focus on street gangs in London. It began with a description and definition of gangs for the purpose of this research, before examining the make up of gangs in London. It was established that much of the research into gang membership and gang interventions was still very much heavily referenced in the USA, accepting some smaller scale studies have taken place in the UK in recent years.

In order to answer the questions posited, four key objectives were addressed that dealt with specific aspects of the research. Chapter 3, dealt with the first objective, which was to determine how mediation was established as a tactic for diffusing gang tensions and reducing violence. An examination of other types of gang interventions and an evaluation of outcomes was completed before moving on to discuss mediation as tactic to reduce gang violence in
London. This discussion was contextualised in how mediation as a tactic was introduced into the Metropolitan Police area at a time of perceived rising incidents of violent intra gang disputes and falling public confidence in the police pre and post the London riots.

How mediation was introduced as a tactic in the MPS was then discussed. How it was initially introduced into six boroughs considered gang crime hotspots, and then subsequently rolled out across London to all thirty-two Boroughs. The challenges of obtaining buy-in from senior police officers who would commission the intervention, and the local authorities and partners was examined and it was shown that the provision of a much-needed wrap-around support service was necessary in order to support the mediation process.

In Chapter 4, a comprehensive account of the research design was presented, looking at data sources and methods used. A discussion around the philosophical position to the research was presented together with an explanation as to why an approach of inductivism to this research was adopted.

A clear and transparent account of these methods was presented and a discussion of how adopted police procedures such as methodology and intelligence-gathering processes were not disclosed in this study. There was an acceptance that the limitations and reliability of the qualitative research methods adopted, such as the samples and the sampling strategy, the
parameters of the research site and the limitations of the analysis. In the research process there was a description of the approach to the analysis. I examined the journey of interviewee selection to practicalities around the actual taped interview process. There is also a section on ethical matters, which required careful consideration.

In chapter 5, the substantive analytical work is described, with an investigation into the outcomes of mediation and in particular, the difference in outcomes on reoffending for those who were referred for mediation and those who were not. The results of the data sets that I analysed were examined and in chapter 6 the common themes emerging from the interviews conducted with the various stakeholders and conflict engagement specialists were identified. Evidence was provided that demonstrated mediation to be one effective gang control intervention and suggested how effective mediation contributed to this successful outcome.

It was demonstrated that, very often, an individual who had been referred for mediation was often enough, to trigger a change in behaviour and subsequently cessation in violent offending. An examination of the third objective in this chapter, determined the benefits and limitations of mediation and transformational services. An illustration of how immediate and practical interventions can be implemented was presented, particularly if inappropriate responses develop or reactive behaviours become apparent during the mediation programme.
In chapter 7, the implications of the findings in relation to answering the overall research question was discussed and concluded that a major challenge for the future is to continue studying the outcomes of mediation and benefits of transformational services in context and determine whether my findings are apparent over a longer period of assessment.

Chapter 8, the Conclusion, is a reflective account of both the overall processes and particulars of the study, and discusses the practical implications of the research. This final chapter further positions this study in the context of escalating youth violence in London and asks judicious questions about the future opportunities for gang desistance and workable interventions.

**Why the research is important for researchers and practitioners?**

“Society needs objective investigations and evidence, not ‘moral panic’- in short, facts not fears” (Vigil, 2002:14).

Vigil rightly attests that knee jerk attempts to implement gang programmes should be avoided. Evidence based and intelligence led interventions should be seen as the most effective options. Klein, Maxson and Miller state

“The saddest message of all is simply this: little that has been done can be demonstrated to be useful. Thus, the clues for the future have less
to do with what might work, than with avoiding in the future what has not worked” (1995:249).

So in agreement with eminent academic gang experts, I suggest practitioners are able to “avoid” doing that which we know does not yield positive results and repeat (and hopefully, improve on) those interventions that do. And when implementing any intervention, this should be done in accordance with detailed research and prior problem solving analysis, as opposed to a reaction to populist opinion fuelled by media sensationalism.

In the case of the intervention of mediation, by establishing the effective outcomes of the mediation process and demonstrating the impact it has on violent offenders and gang members as per this study, I would posit mediation is something that needs to be rolled out and implemented in a wider context than it currently is. At the moment, the police are the main sources of referral. Over 90% of current referrals come from local police officers working in London’s boroughs. There are very small numbers of local authority referrals, which have significantly reduced in the aftermath of the swingeing cuts, imposed since 2012. Probation and prison referrals are at zero. This seems incredulous given the findings of this report and the levels of violence committed by gang members whilst on probation. Violent offending in prison is rarely reported to the police.
What are the practice implications for the research?

The research conducted for this study suggest that policymakers and those in charge of funding to date, appear not to have been inclined to support efforts to document intervention efficacy or to roll out evidence-based interventions on a larger scale. There do not appear to be any real concerns that the impact of such intervention might be limited or that the programme may not be cost effective. I encountered countless recommendations and ideas on the best means to significantly reduce gang related violence in the absence of any real validation.

This study demonstrates that mediation as a tactic when properly used and when identifying the most at risk individuals, does produce some promising outcomes. This is important, as the data produced from this research can be used to build further effective interventions in the future.

There will always be gangs and there will always be gang members. When a gang is dismantled or its numbers reduced significantly to prevent its successful operation, another rival gang will fill the vacuum and take over the illegal workings of its predecessor. The lack of opportunities for young disenfranchised individuals in London today; poor housing; pitiful education opportunities for those in deprived areas of London; and significant underfunded social services provision, all contribute to pushing young people into ventures where they can use the skills they know best, which very often are illegal and involve violence.
Policy makers and researchers need to better understand the problems associated with gangs and gang violence, which is a social problem.

“For researchers, it is important to refine measurement: to assess the validity and reliability of the measures being used. For theorists, it is important to better understand factors associated with gang membership and associated behaviours, whether testing or constructing theory” (Braga, 2010:122).

Scholars such as Esbensen, Winfree, He and Taylor (2001), recognise the significance of information sharing and collaboration between policy makers and academics; although I would suggest, that those involved in gang suppression and interventions should be involved in the development of research, as they experience first hand which different interventions work and do not within their organisations.

From the research I have conducted, I would suggest further problem solving analysis is required prior to the implementation of any gang intervention. In particular, the findings suggest that particular individual gang members are more amenable to mediation, whereas others are unreachable. This demonstrates that an intervention focussing on individuals may be more productive than interventions that concentrate on tackling a collective. That is not to say that the collective group should be ignored. Gangs operate in groups and therefore interventions that tackle groups are important. What
mediation offers is a branch to those individual(s) who do wish to engage, even if they do not ultimately want to exit their gang lifestyle.

There is an unintended consequence of mediation, which is the powerful deterrence message delivered by the mediator on initial contact. When it comes to analysing the outcome or effect that first meeting has on an individual referred for mediation, the results are the same, whether the individual engages or not. The initial violent incident that prompted the intervention does not escalate or occur.

The mediator has the ability to act as the mouthpiece for law enforcement personnel, and to deliver a deterrence message (the pushing levers), in addition to offering support and advice (the pulling levers) and possible assistance for the future

Interventions that address, not only gang offending, but collective violence in general, particularly committed by young people require further research. This type of violence differs from the violence that exits on our streets as a result of alcohol or drug consumption. It is a type of violence that is habitually administered by collectives against another individual or individuals, on the pretext that someone has been disrespectful to another. It will be interesting to monitor the outcomes of Operation Shield (for more information, see below) in London in the future.
Regrettably, up until now, typical gang intervention literature was not in a position to make any strong statements about “what actually works (McGloin, 2005). Indeed, many interventions continue without any proper evaluation, and start before any real problem analysis, which in turn may lead to the use of inappropriate and ineffective interventions (Braga, Kennedy, Piehl and Waring, 2001). In addition, Decker (2003) concurs that the efficacy of the approaches to reduce violent gang offending typically has not been thoroughly evaluated. However, this original research makes a significant contribution to gang intervention literature and asserts mediation as an effective intervention.

A concern that I would highlight, which requires careful consideration for future research is, to what lengths can communities provide credible options that are more appealing to the safety and status that gangs offer? (Decker & Curry, 2002)

Intervention programmes, like mediation, provide long lasting results such as violence desistance, which will contribute towards violence reduction and can be effective in preventing the continuing spiralling levels of violence, inflicted by gang members on the community. But even mediation needs to be supplemented with diverse levels of transformational services that offer mentoring and support to those engaging with the mediation process. I would argue that there needs to be an increase in community-based intervention programmes, that will provide on-going support to those wishing to exit their current way of life.
Mediation does identify gang members who wish to exit their gang lifestyle and wish to make the transition into established society. “Safe and Secure” is an intervention programme intended to assist in re-housing gang members and their families, usually out of London or to another area of the capital to enable a fresh start. Training, education or work placement is arranged and can provide gang members with the necessary skills required to function in society and break down existing barriers that prevent or deter gang members from competing for employment opportunities. This is particularly crucial since most gang members are identified as having low academic achievement and indeed has been a strong predicator of gang membership (Wyrick and Howell, 2004).

Between January 1st 2005 and December 31st 2014, 164 young people have died in violent circumstances on the streets of London. Most of these deaths can be attributed to gang related violence. (Citizens’ Report, 2014).

Nine young people were murdered in the capital during the first nine days of 2015. The present Government is under immense pressure mainly due to the continuous coverage of violent gang activity published in the media to reduce gang related violence.

In January 2015, The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson launched the much-lauded Operation Shield, where legislation has been introduced to collectively punish the activities of some of the most violent and prolific gang members in Haringey, Lambeth and Westminster Boroughs, for the activities of their gang,
even if they are not involved. Boris Johnson in a BBC interview on 15th January 2015 stated,

“*It’s time we gave these gang members a clear ultimatum – the police know who you are and if anyone in the gang steps out of line then every member will face consequences*” (BBC, 2015).

However, just £800,000 has been pledged to fund the operation, which is a drop in the ocean when considering the number of interventions that this amount will actually pay for.

The key findings emanating from this research conclude that, individuals do not always engage in mediation. However, the most appropriate people do tend to be referred - i.e. those at most risk. My research shows that the more at risk an individual is, the more likely they are to engage.

Transformational support is essential to the ongoing process. Mediation alone is not the panacea to solving violent conflict, but delivered effectively, mediation works. The ideal outcome for the whole mediation process is a classic mediation where the two parties meet and agree not to carry on the conflict but understanding this is not about making friends.

All of the mediators who were interviewed feel that, often it is enough just to make initial contact. By disclosing that a “beef” is known outside of those involved in conflict is sometimes enough to reduce the seriousness of the
event and prevent it culminating into tragic situation. A successful first meeting is dialogue between the mediator and the participant. A successful outcome is the reported incident not escalating or threat of violence not taking place.

The mediators interviewed have real-life experiences of growing up in London and living among those involved in gangs and recognise that conflicts can arise from the most innocuous situation. From a classroom spat where a boy refuses to close a door because one is cold and the other is not, which then escalates into routine violent attacks, which almost resulted in a death, to an organised criminal network squabble over business rivalry with contracts put out on an individual's life. (M1)

Too many people with a responsibility for the safety and security of young people in London still do not ‘get it’. Family and friends support in the process enhances the mediation programme, is crucial and mediators believe their support delivers better results. Families are often in denial over the issues facing their children and many families have a lack of any positive male role models for those involved in gangs.

The lack of credibility and commitment of other intervention programmes and those responsible for delivering them makes an initial meeting for a mediator very problematic. At an initial meeting, the mediators are often seen as another attempt by the authorities of interfering. But the mediators interviewed have a real passion for delivering the service at CCM.
“I don’t want to see another young person die in a senseless attack. I cried my first night in prison and defy anyone to say anything to the contrary. It is a scary place. I didn’t know what was going to happen to me.” (M2)

Respect or rather a lack of, is a recurring theme that mediators come upon as being the instigating factor for the conflicts, which emanate out of a perceived lack of respect between two or more individuals. For mediation to work, there has to be a mutual respect for the process and the participants in conflicts views of each other. They are never going to be friends, but they must come to an understanding for the conflict to dissipate.

The issue of funding strongly features. Mediators rely on their own personal contacts to provide the carrots or pulling leavers as Klein describes them, necessary to complete the mediation process. Opportunities for; better housing, training, jobs, are vital to help individuals to exit their lifestyle.

Some individuals see mediation as being a way of amplifying their status. If they are referred for mediation this means that,

"they are a serious ‘bad ass’ gang member, at the top of the tree" (M3).

They are acutely aware that the MPS refer high-risk individuals. The inability to allow self referrals or referrals from the community places an enormous burden on the police to ensure they identify the right people.
Collectively, as an organisation, there needs to be an understanding that increased enforcement activity on a particular individual or gang will move that person higher up the gang matrix risk register, thus potentially skewing the real level of harm and risk that those individual(s) pose to society and to themselves.

Only a handful of the 32 boroughs in London understand mediation and have their own contracts in place to deal with violent conflicts. Many others pursue their own individual brands of mediation in isolation to the current approved system. This is often due to mistrust of the one-model fits all approach; and local authorities having the autonomy to commission any project they see fit to address violence reduction. Many of these interventions are not tested and poorly thought out. They are parochial and work in isolation to many of the other services being offered by many of the agencies operating in London. Waltham Forest and Camden cited as good examples of using mediation to reduce violence. They understand the benefits, are more joined up, and have the requisite multi-agency approach to violence reduction.

**Implications for practitioners**

The current system of mediation referral is too inflexible. The inability in London for individuals to self-refer or for referrals to come from the community, places an enormous burden on the police to ensure they identify the right people at an appropriate time.
The issue surrounding what constitutes a gang causes more complications to what should be a straightforward implementation of social measures designed to address the cause, treat the problem and prevent its reoccurrence (Ball & Curry, 1995). Transformational support is essential to the on going process. Generally, a single intervention programme in isolation is not the solution to solving violent conflicts.

Those charged with delivering an intervention should have real life experiences of growing up in gang prevalent areas and lived or are still living among those involved in gangs – which will lend credibility to their position and gain the trust of those whom they are trying to support.

When considering interventions that are currently being implemented in the USA, there needs to be an understanding of the key difference between London gangs and US gangs. US gangs are mainly multi-generational. This is a phenomenon yet to be seen in London street gangs. The programmes currently being implemented in the US focus on communities where the multi-generational gangs live and operate. Before implementing these types of multi-generational focussed interventions, outputs need to be clearly articulated and understood by those charged with delivering the programmes.

Using statistical analysis, I established that individuals referred for mediation in London commit less serious violence than those not referred for mediation. This is a significant finding that requires further analysis and greater research. In the first year of mediation delivery, analysing the first four cases to be closed entirely, CCM demonstrated that, through mediation, they had prevented one murder and one serious violent incident and had probably
(80% probability) prevented a further murder and violent incident occurring. A total cost savings of £3,007,092 (Tribal, 2010).

There are varying degrees of engagement in the mediation process with various outcomes. Engagement ranges from total engagement to non-engagement and outcomes suggest there are positive results emanating as a result of contact. More significant though, are the outcomes following the actual referring of individuals for the intervention as opposed to their level of engagement. There is strong evidence to suggest making contact with an individual involved in gang violence and the offering to support the referred person through repeated meetings over a period of time actually reduces violent offending and violence occurring.

I have concluded that there is much more research needed in this complex area of gang and group offending and identifying what works in an effort to reduce opportunities for reoffending and protect young people from this vicious cycle of violence.

I also conclude that there are too many interventions used on an ad-hoc basis; without co-ordinating the efforts of other agencies, a lack of proper controls in place; and a general sticking plaster mentality adopted by those charged with commissioning the interventions. It appears that the problem is being passed from agency to agency, without any real cognisance of who is and more importantly, who should be responsible for what.

Whether the activity taken to date works or not is academic. The very fact that
agencies have taken decisive action to address the ‘problem’ will mean that they can move onto the next issue that requires their attention. I would advocate that stricter controls should be implemented and far more vigorous checks conducted before any funding is released for such programmes so that the following can be established:

- What is the issue that needs addressing?
- What work is currently being undertaken to address the issue?
- What should we be doing?
- How can we engage other agencies (the right agencies) in our activity?
- How long should this activity last?
- Why is this activity necessary?
- What is the outcome we are seeking?
- What next. What transformational support is required to sustain the progress made?

Once these questions can be answered satisfactorily, then and only then, can agencies claim that they are doing their best to address the issues and that they are not undertaking this task in isolation. They need additional support, working together with supporting agencies whose initiatives and interventions complement each other’s activities. The common goal is to reduce violent offending occurring on London’s streets and to share learning at home and abroad ensuring those interventions that have the greatest impact and affect on reducing violent offending are used wherever they are needed.

To date, no single intervention programme has been able to demonstrate complete success. Agreeing with findings of a literature review conducted by
Jeanne Stinchcomb in 2002 looking at intervention programmes, I conclude that there are particular elements of various initiatives that are worthy of notice and are capable of being replicated or modified to suit specific issues. The critical component of any intervention is the ability to determine what works in a particular area, focusing on a specific type of gang problem, dealing with an actual identifiable group or gang of juveniles. Reiterating Maxson and Klein’s conclusions (2006), through the analysis of community needs, we are able to develop the necessary appropriate frameworks, having conducted a problem profile prior to the implementation of any strategy aimed at reducing gang related violence. Stinchcomb notes that the programmes that seem to have little success are ones with detached street workers and police suppression strategies. Programmes that appear to have encouraging outcomes are ones that are relevant to the needs of the community, and have proactive transformational strategies aimed at discouraging youths from joining gangs in the first place, with school-based intervention and support programmes, and comprehensive community programs. In conclusion, a major element for success, it seems, is to pursue interventions that offer a range of tactics and initiatives to address various aspects of the problems associated with violence and gangs. Mediation has demonstrated that it can have a massive impact on reducing repeat violence. Used together with other successful intervention programmes in the right context, could yield even better results. But in order to truly understand its impact, mediation will need to be undertaken far more widely across the capital with constant monitoring and evaluation processes in place to better understand the impact it is having on violence in London.
What this study demonstrates is that violence desistance or reduction can rarely be solely attributed to mediation alone, however, clear evidence exists in this research, which reveals this tactic's significant qualities contribute towards a successful outcome, namely saving lives.
Post Script  Reflection on the process

I found data collection, organising and storing was more complicated than I envisaged. There were many reasons for this. I was conducting semi-structured interviews with educated professionals who were passionate about working with those involved in gang disorder and violence. They were interested in what I was doing and keen to help. They provided me with so much information and data that when it came to determining and abstracting the significant and common themes, my task became extremely time consuming. I wanted to use it all, but was restricted by not only the topic I had chosen for my research, but the word count. I know however, I have much data that will enable further articles and journals to be published in the future.

With regards to my quantitative research, however, it was necessary to secure the assistance of a researcher in order to access the data I needed to carry out this part of the research. This provided me with the opportunity to talk through what was needed and the limitations of such research. Through the advice and guidance of my research assistant, an analyst from the Trident Gangs Unit, my expectations were managed and I was able to collect exactly the type of data needed to answer my research question.

I certainly found the quantitative and qualitative research designs challenging. I have learnt that I need to build in far more time in the future for similar projects. However, that being said, I have truly learnt much about research methods, patience, diplomacy and tenacity when completing this project. The need for contingency planning should be a fundamental component of any research strategy. I travelled across London, the South of England and then
across the length and breadth of the USA to meet law enforcement personnel, academics; community workers; and mediators. People I met were very generous with their time, but I will never underestimate the amount of planning and preparation it takes to actually travel, introduce the study and purpose of the meeting; carry out the semi structured interview; write it up and feed back to the interviewee prior to publication. That being said, this was the most enjoyable part of the whole process.

I faced many challenges along the way, most notably with time management. I felt my interviews conducted with the experts, on the whole, went very well. I am confident that I spoke to the right people who provided me with the rich data that I needed to enhance my knowledge on gangs and mediation. The snowball-sampling method was an excellent way of accessing people I would not have been familiar with and certainly gave me expert views from additional angles.

I am happy with my choice of questions, confident that they addressed the relevant areas and issues that I wanted to cover, and still allowed unrestricted and tangential conversations, which provided me with valuable additional information. I am pleased with the cross-section of participants - conflict engagement specialists; a youth engagement worker; and officers and staff involved in mediation referrals. These individuals possess a wealth of knowledge, many spanning over 30 years of working at the front line, dealing with gang violence and murder.
There were things that did not go well such as technical and logistical difficulties around initial interviews, but I believe I overcame those obstacles successfully. There were issues around finding a suitable venue to conduct the interviews, which ended up taking place.

I was mindful to avoid research bias (Robson, 2011) and thus had to ensure that the lines of questioning I proposed did not offer the participants a particular path to suit my needs, but allowed them offer me their honest opinions and experiences. I was also cognisant of the Hawthorn effect\textsuperscript{19}, in which interviewed people answer questions in a particular way, to please me. Data collection proved time consuming, and the summer holidays presented scheduling challenges in light of self imposed deadlines.

With regards to non-probability purposive sampling of participants, I believe this is the most suitable way to obtain the information I required. I am aware that this method is not designed to provide “generalisability “e.g. data representative of experts’ opinions of all gang members and their level of offending, but I believe my chosen method is suitable, fit for purpose and reliable. I was searching for the best information (Denscombe, 2007:17) and I believe I found it.

\textsuperscript{19} The Hawthorne effect is a form of reactivity whereby subjects improve or modify an aspect of their behaviour being experimentally measured simply in response to the fact that they are being studied, not in response to any particular experimental manipulation. The term was coined in 1950 by Henry A. Landsberger when analysing older experiments from 1924-1932 at the Hawthorne Works a Western Electric factory outside Chicago.
I found it really useful to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods for this area of study as it emphasised the empirical clash of epistemological stances when employing these two methods, which are often viewed as adversaries. However, upon reflection, I believe a mixed method approach to study offers a more holistic view and they ultimately complement each other, capturing the strengths of both styles (Cresswell 2009). My recommendations will need to be persuasive and convincing if they are to be adopted (Bryman, 2008:661).
References


Canaan Project (2013) He’s a road man… retrieved on 16th January, 2016 from http://canaanproject.co.uk/2013/03/hes-a-road-man/


The Guardian, (2013). *Operation Trident is effectively over – now we are all*
vulnerable by Claudia Webbe, retrieved on 1st February, 2016 from http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/mar/14/operation-trident-effectively-over-murder


Malanczuk, P. (2002). *Akehurst's modern introduction to international law:*


Phelps, E. (2011). *What is the impact, if any, of gang membership on offending levels in Camden? A Qualitative and Quantitative Study.* Unpublished research.


## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Timeline of Research

#### Project Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1 – 2012/2013</th>
<th>Year 2 – 2013/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up Diary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographie s Log</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for MPS consent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial meet with CCM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction Chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collate/analyse data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile Charts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribe interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Lit. review Ch.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Ch Methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ch Findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/R effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft/re writes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (weeks)</td>
<td>1 1 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Year 3 – 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3 - 2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final draft/re writes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (weeks)</td>
<td>1 1 2 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

257
Appendix B: Consent Forms

Consent Form

Study Title: Mediation and Gangs: A study of violence reduction using conflict resolution in the Metropolitan Police area in London
REC Ref No: .................................................................
Name of Researcher: Eric Phelps.

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated.. 
   ................................ (version............) for the above study. I have had the opportunity
to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered 
satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to 
   withdraw at any time without giving any reason., up until the analysis of the data 
   which is anticipated to be 01/09/13.

3. I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by 
   individuals from Portsmouth University, or from regulatory authorities. 
   I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data

4. I agree to my interview being audio recorded..

5. I agree to being quoted verbatim.

6. I agree to take part in this study.

Name of Participant:  Date:  Signature:
Name of Person taking consent:  Date:  Signature:
When completed: 1 copy for the participant; and one copy for the researcher’s file;
Study Title: Mediation and Gangs: A study of violence reduction using conflict resolution in the Metropolitan Police area in London

I would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear.

I am conducting research as part of my professional doctorate studies and have chosen to evaluate the outcomes of mediation when used as a tactic as a consequence of a violent incident or threat of such, particularly in relation to gang violence.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the outcomes of mediation and examine what success looks like. Does it reduce reoffending and contribute to violence reduction? This study will also be submitted to fulfil the requirements of my professional doctorate studies.

Why have I been invited?
CCM currently have the contract to provide mediation following on from referrals of individuals believed to be involved in gang violence. To date CCM have mediated in over 250 cases. I would like to speak to those who have first hand knowledge in an attempt to learn what success looks like for you and what are the outcomes of your interventions.

Do I have to take part?
It is entirely your own decision whether or not to take part in this research. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet. If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to sign a consent form.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you agree to take part, I would like to interview you on tape. The only reason I will be recording the interview is so not to miss anything you may say that I am unable to capture during the interview. Also, I would like to listen to the interview to ensure that I have understood what you are saying. I will ask your permission to use any quotes that you give in relation to my research, and will take all steps possible to ensure anonymity is retained. I will not identify you by name and will assign a number to every mediator whom I speak with.
will also take the greatest of care to ensure individuals to whom you refer to cannot be identified by sanitising any data. The tapes will be transcribed and then destroyed. The tapes will be kept in a locked and secure cabinet to which only I have a key until they are transcribed. Transcripts will be kept in the same place and destroyed once my Thesis has been submitted and meets the requirements for my doctoral award.

**Expenses and payments**

All interviews will be conducted in your normal place of work or at a place of your choice in Central London.

**What will I have to do?**

If you agree to take part, I will conduct a semi-structured interview that should last between 30 minutes and an hour. The interview will be in relation to your experiences as a mediator.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

The risk of taking part may result in you being identified by direct quotes. Prior to their inclusion, I will send you a copy of the quote and confirm if you are happy for it to be used. I will not mention you by name and will assign numbers to all those participating from CCM. There is no perceived risk to CCM’s contract with MPS as a result of this study as a) the tender process for the renewal of the mediation process for the next 2 years is being implemented in October 2013; and b) This study is looking at outcomes and not successes per se.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The benefit of taking part will hopefully be a better understanding of the outcomes of mediation and quantifying what success looks like.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

If you join the study, I will ensure that any quotes will be anonymous and that individuals interviewed will be given pseudonyms to prevent data collected being looked at by authorised persons from CCM or the Metropolitan Police Service. This data may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. Again, you will not be identifiable by this.

With regards to all data collected from the interviews, please be assured:

- that it will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. Your name will not appear on any documentation and you will be assigned a number to differentiate you from other participants.
- The information gained from the interviews will only be retained for as long as is necessary and will be destroyed once the requirement of the professional doctorate submission has been satisfied. It will not be used for any future research.
- The only individuals that will have access to sanitised research data where you will not be identifiable will be my tutors and the ethics committee at the university, should they request access.

**What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?**
If you decide that you no longer wish to take part once you have given consent, that is entirely your right. I will also give you the opportunity to remove any data thus far obtained from the research and give assurances that it will be so destroyed immediately.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions [0]23 9284 3933. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by writing to Dr Phil Clements, Head of the Institute for Criminal Justice Studies at the address at the top of page 1.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The findings of my research will be used to complete my doctoral thesis. I will complete a summary of my findings and provide copies to CCM for distribution to participants. You will not be identified in any report/publication unless I have your written consent to do so.

Who is organising and funding the research?
My research will be sponsored by the University of Portsmouth and the Metropolitan Police Service. This research will inform both organisations of the outcomes of using mediation as a tactic to reduce gang violence in London.

Who has reviewed the study?
Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Further information and contact details

   Eric Phelps – 07950 683565

   Dr Phil Clements- 023 9284 3933

If you have any questions as to whether you should participate, please also contact the above, or Andy Simmons at CCM on 07787 278785

Capital Conflict Management is supporting this research and will be given access to its findings.
This will be done by way of a report which does not identify any individuals or attribute any direct quotes to them in a way that could so identify them.

Concluding statement
Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet. If you decide to participate you will be given a copy of the information sheet to keep and your signature of consent will be required on a separate consent form.
Appendix D: Semi – Structured Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Structured Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Evidence of Favourable Ethical Opinion

Mr Eric Phelps  Professional Doctorate Student Institute of Criminal Justice Studies University of Portsmouth

REC reference number: 12/13:22

Please quote this number on all correspondence.

July 3rd 2013 Dear Eric,

Full Title of Study:

Documents reviewed:


Consent Form  Interview Questions Invitation Letters  Participant Information Sheet Protocol

Further to our recent correspondence, this proposal was reviewed by The Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

I am pleased to tell you that the proposal was awarded a favourable ethical opinion by the committee.

Kind regards, FHSS FREC Chair

David Carpenter

Members participating in the review:

- David Carpenter
- Jane Winstone
Appendix 8 – Ethic Check List

FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please complete and return the form to Research Section, Quality Management Division, Academic Registry, University House, with your thesis, prior to examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</th>
<th>Student ID: 116392</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Name:</td>
<td>Eric Phelps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>ICJS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr. Phil Clements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date:</td>
<td>Sept 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Mode and Route:</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>MPhil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Thesis:</th>
<th>Mediation and Gangs: A Study of Violence Reduction in the Metropolitan Police Area in London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Word Count:</td>
<td>50966 (excluding ancillary data)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: [http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/](http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/))

- a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame? **YES**
- b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged? **YES**

264